SANKARA
the missionary



CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST
MUMBAI

In book form
First published in - 1978 - 5000 copies
Reprint - 1990 - 5000 copies
Revised Edition - June 1998 - 2000 copies

Published by

CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST
Sāndīpany Sādhanālaya
Sākī Vihār Road
Mumbai - 400 072
Tel 857 2367
Fax 91-22-857 3065
E Mail < chinmaya@bom2 vsnl net in >

Distribution Office for USA

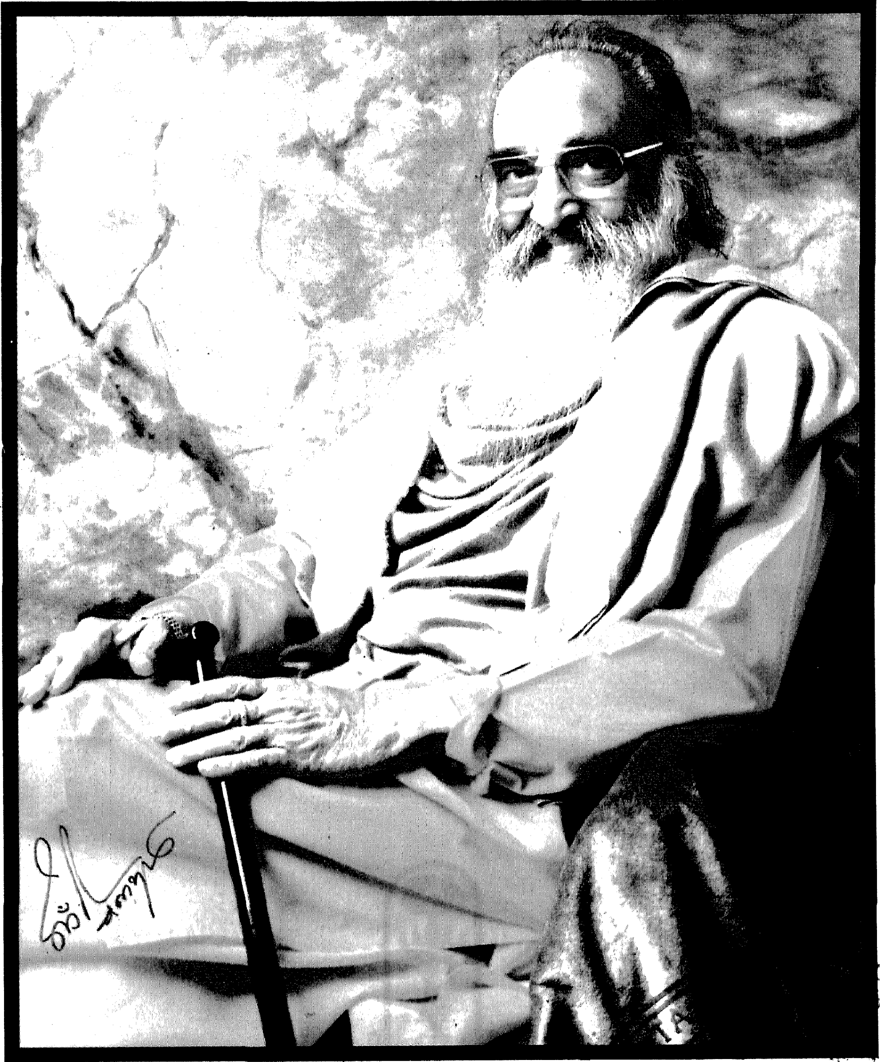
CHINMAYA MISSION WEST,
560, Bridgetown Pike,
Langhorne, PA 19053, U S A
Phone (215)-396-0390
Fax-215-396-9710

DTP Typesetting by

Promila Computer Services Pvt Ltd
1, Umā Kunj, 110 Model Town,
J P Road, Andherī (W)
Mumbai - 400 053
Tel 636 0966/634 1851

Printed by

Priya Graphics
E-127, Ansa Industrial Estate
Sākī Vihār Road, Sākīnākā
Mumbai - 400 072
Phone 852 0675/859 4417



H.H. Swami Chinmayananaa

Contents

Foreword

Śankara is not an individual To us students of the *Advaita* philosophy, *Śankara* is an institution No single person could ever have achieved what he had achieved in his short span of life No Master or Prophet had ever achieved so much, for so many, in so short a time Very often this tempts us to consider that *Śankara* was an *avatāra*.

To deify anyone is take things for granted, and thereafter, our ordinary logic and rationale cannot be applied in studying such an individual's life To test *Ācārya Śankara*, the *avatāra*, would thereafter be a palpable contradiction—to test by reason the alleged operations of omnipotence or to apply the code of common laws of logic to the Lawgiver who framed his very universe

In this book, though the material gathered, in its totality, projects *Śankara* as a majestic entity striding over the total achievements of ordinary folk; through a quieter evaluation we shall find that *Śankara*'s work represents the total turnover of a highly competent person, working intensively every hour of the day, under conditions of the highest mental and intellectual efficiency *Yogī-s* invoke this 'total capacity,' lying dormant in everyone I recommend this book to every student of *Vedānta* for a deep and sympathetic study

Swami Chinmayananda

Preface to the Present Edition

'Śankara the Missionary' was first published as a Souvenir for the 267th *Gītā Jñāna Yajña* at Jamshedpur in the year 1978. In his Foreword, *Gurudeva* has emphasised that *Śaṅkara* is not an individual but an institution rather a phenomenon, who achieved so much in such a short span of life

Śaṅkara left his home in search of his *Guru* when he was hardly seven years When he met his *Guru Govindpāda* for the first time, the *Guru* asked who he was? *Śaṅkara's* reply was in the form of ten verses known as *Daśa Śloki*, each ending with the words *Śivaḥ kevalo'ham* (I am of the form of Pure Auspiciousness). Again, when he disclosed to his disciples and devotees at *Kedāranātha* that he was at the verge of discarding his body, at the specific request from his disciples as well as his ardent devotee the *Rājā* of *Banāras*, he again chanted these very verses... *Daśa Śloki*, which sparkle with subtle meditative thoughts, and instructed them specifically to contemplate and meditate upon the ideas contained in the verses Thus considering the importance of *Daśa śloki*, we have added transliteration and word-for-word meaning of these verses forming Chapter IX of this book We do hope that this would help serious *Sādhakā-s* to grasp the deep significance of these verses

In this revised Edition, diacritical marks are used for Transliteration of *Samskṛta* words in the commentary A new 'word-for-word meaning' section has been added to the *Daśa Śloki* verses, to enable the sincere seekers to have an in-depth study For the benefit of readers not knowing *Devanāgarī*, transliteration of *Samskṛta* words is also added to

this section. Non-English words have been italicised This will help readers to identify and pronounce the words correctly.

The English plural sign 's' has been added to the untranslated *Samskrta* words after a hyphen (-) to show that it is not elemental to the word e g , *mantrā-s, Vedā-s, Ṛṣī-s* etc Macrons are used on the last letter e g , *'ā, ī'* of such words to lengthen the quantity of sound in consonance with the pronunciation..

A key to the transliteration and pronunciation is added in the beginning

We are pleased to bring out the present revised Edition of the original collection of articles ordered to be published in book form by *H. H. Svāmī Chinmayānanda* whom we all reverentially refer as *Pūjya Gurudeva.* This is our humble offering at His holy feet with a prayer that may His words and guidance inspire us to carry on His work in all spheres of activities such as this---publication of scriptural thoughts for the benefit of the society.

Guḍhīpādavā Day : 28th March, 1998. **Publishers**

TRANSLITERATION GUIDE FOR *SAṀSKṚTA* WORDS

a	as *o* in son	अ*
ā	as *a* in master	आ (ा)*
b	as *b* in book	ब्
c	as *ch* in check	च
d	as *d* in father,then	द्
d	as *d* in do	ड्
e	as *a* in evade	ए (े)*
g	as *g* in good	ग्
h	as *h* in hard	ह्
ḥ	as *h* in oh!	:
i	as *i* in if	इ (ि)*
ī	as *ee* in feel	ई (ी)*
j	as *j* in jar	ज्
k	as *k* in kite	क्
l	as *l* in Lord	ल्
m	as *m* in man	म्
m	as *m* in simple, hum	(ं)
n	as *n* in nose	न्
ṅ	as *n* in monkey	ङ्
ñ	as *n* in lunch	ञ्
ṇ	as *n* in under (hard)	ण्
o	as *o* in over	ओ (ो)*
p	as *p* in put	प्
r	as *r* in run	र्
r	as *r* in Krsna	ऋ
ś	as *sh* in shut	श्
ṣ	as *sh* in show	ष्
s	as *s* in sit	स्
t	as *t* in french sound	त्
t	as *t* in touch	ट्
u	as *u* in full	उ (ु)*
ū	as *oo* in boot	ऊ (ू)*
v	as *w* in want, avert	व्
y	as *y* in yak	य्
ai	as *y* in my	ऐ (ै)*
au	as *ow* in now	औ (ौ)*
bh	as *bh* in abhor	भ्
ch	as *chh* in catch him	छ्
dh	as *theh* in breathe	ध्
ḍh	as *dh* in godhood	ढ्
gh	as *gh* in ghost	घ्
jh	as *dgeh* in hedgehog	झ्
kh	as *kh* in khāki	ख्
ph	as *ph* in photo	फ्
th	as *th* in thumb	थ्
th	as *th* in ant-hill	ठ्
'	as unwritten '*a*' sound	ऽ
''	as - do - '*aa*' sound	ऽऽ

Also letters ḷ and ṝ represent ऌ* and ॠ* respectively and F, Q, W, X and Z are not called to use

---

In *samskrta*, consonants represented with a stroke below e g as in क् cannot be pronounced except in conjunction with a vowel marked * e g क्(k) + अ (a) = क (ka)

For easy pronunciation while reading or reciting, in some publications, the break-up of the transliteration is based on the phonetic sounds and not on the basis of *samskrta* grammer rules or words

Introduction

Śaṅkara—The Spiritual General

by Swāmī Chinmayānanda

Bhagavadpāda Ācārya Śankara was not only a great thinker and the noblest of *Advaitik* philosophers, but he was essentially an inspired champion of *Hindūism* and one of the most vigorous missionaries in our country. Such a powerful leader was needed at that time when *Hindūism* had been almost smothered within the enticing entaglements of the *Buddhistik* philosophy, and consequently the decadent *Hindū* society came to be disunited and broken up into numberless sects and denominations, each championing a different view-point and engaged in mutual quarrels and endless argumentations Each *pandita*, as it were, had his own followers, his own philosophy, his own interpretation, each one was a vehement and powerful opponent of all other views This intellectual disintegration, especially in the scriptural field, was never before so serious and so dangerously calamitous as in the times of *Śaṅkara.*

It had been at a similar time, when our society was fertile for any ideal thought or practical philosophy to thrive, that the beautiful values of non-injury, self-control, love and affection of the Buddha had come to enchant alike the kings and their subjects of this country. But the general decadence of the age did not spare the Buddhists either They, among themselves, precipitated different viewpoints, and by the time *Śaṅkara* appeared on the horizon of *Hindū* history, the atheistic school of Buddhists (*āśāvādī-s*) had enticed away large sections of the *Hindū* folk

It was into such a chaotic intellectual atmosphere that *Śaṅkara* brought his life-giving philosophy of the Non-dual *Brahman* of the *Upanisad-s* It can be very well understood what a colossal work it must have been for any one man to undertake in those days when modern conveniences of mechanical transport and instruments of propaganda were unknown. The genius in *Śankara* did solve the problem, and by the time he placed at rest his mortal coil he had whipped the false Buddhistic ideology beyond the shores of our country and had reintegrated the philosophical thoughts in the then *Āryavarta* After centuries of wandering, no doubt richer for her various experiences but tired and fatigued, *Bhārat* came back to her own native thoughts

In his missionary work of propagating the great philosophical truths of the *Upaniṣad-s* and of rediscovering through them the true cultural basis of our nation, *Ācārya Śaṅkara* had a variety of efficient weapons in his resourceful armoury He was indeed pre-eminently the fittest genius who could have undertaken this self-appointed task as the sole guardian angel of the *Ṛṣi*-culture. An exquisite thinker, a brilliant intellect, a personality scintillating with the vision of Truth, a heart throbbing with industrious faith and ardent desire to serve the nation, sweetly emotional and relentlessly logical, in *Śankara* the *Upaniṣad-s* discovered the fittest spiritual general It was indeed a vast programme that *Śankara* had to accomplish within the short span of about twenty effective years, for at the age of thirtytwo he had finished his work and had folded up his manifestation among the mortals of the world.

He brought into his work his literary dexterity, both in prose and poetry, and in his hands, under the heat of his fervent ideals, the great *Samskrta* language became almost plastic he could mould it into any shape and into any form. From vigorous prose heavily laden with irresistible arguments to flowing rivulets of lilting tuneful songs of love and beauty, there was no technique in language that *Śankara* did not take

up, and whatever literary form he took up, he proved himself to be a master in it. From masculine prose to soft feminine songs, from marching militant verses to dancing songful words, be he in the halls of the *Upaniṣad* commentaries or in the temple of the *Brahma-sūtra* expositions, in the amphitheatre of his *Bhagavad Gītā* discourses, or in the open flowery fields of his devotional songs, his was a pen that danced to the rhythm of his heart and to the swing of his thoughts.

But pen alone would not have won the war of culture for our country. He showed himself to be a great organizer, a far sighted diplomat, a courageous hero and a tireless servant of the country Selfless and unassuming, this mighty angel strode up and down the length and breadth of the country serving his motherland and teaching his country-men to live up to the dignity and glory of *Bhārat.* Such a vast programme can neither be accomplished by an individual nor sustained without institutions of great discipline and perfect organisation Establishing the *mathā-s*, opening temples, organizing halls of education, and even prescribing certain ecclesiastical codes, this mighty Master left nothing undone in maintaining what he acheived

Periods of revival, especially in art and culture, are generally preceded by a renewed enthusiasm in the ancient books, and this is as it should be With reference to the period in which it is happening, revivalism is a revolution, but at the same time, with reference to the past, it is only an attempt to imbibe the best that was, in order to reinforce the present with it The cultural atmosphere in our country at this moment is ripe for a revivalist movement and many brilliant signs of it are everywhere evident to all those who have got eyes to see Deep philosophical discussions are heard now and then today even in the most unexpected sitting rooms in the busy cities All over the country, crowds of the faithful are increasingly attending the shrines Discourses upon the scriptures are becoming increasingly popular, and in very many of them the discussions are often found to be serious and deep In the

context of this newfound enthusiamsm in the country, we should presume that we are already in an era of cultural revival.

Against such a background, the life and work of *Ādi Śankara* are indeed an inspiration to this country to relive the glorious *Hindū* culture. The *Ācāryā-s* of old never found leisure in their lifetime to write their autobiography or celebrate their birthdays; self-effacement was the very spirit that governed their life and activities. Therefore, all that we know about our great *Rsī-s* and mystic scholars are but traditions clothed in exaggeration, together describing an adorable creature fleeting across history, an ethereal light that flashes across in its own blinding glory.

There are a number of books dealing with the life and work of *Ādi Śankara* in *Saṁskṛta*. Among them, *Śrīmad Śaṅkara Dig-vijayam* of *Śrī Svāmī Vidyāranya*, the incomparable pontiff of the 14th century, is the most popular and outstanding work. The deep knowledge and vast study of *Śrī Madhva*, while he was the Prime Minister of the *Vijayānagar* empire, matured themselves in *Śrī Svāmī Vidyāranya* to yield to posterity this immortal masterpiece.

Today, there is throughout the country a great enthusiasm in *Śankara*, the signs of revival are everywhere around us. On *Śrī Śankara Jayantī* day, we find celebrations everywhere. Unfortunately, none of the thundering platforms successfully brings out the personality of this great Master from *Kālaḍy* (also called *Kālati)*. A lot is known of *Ādi Śankara*, but very few know of 'The *Śaṅkara*.' The more we learn to adore him, not as a divine incarnation but as a sincere man inspired to serve the country and reconquer the nation from its slavery to alien ideologies, the more we shall successfully pay our tribute to our own culture.

Śaṅkara—The Effulgent Efflorescence of India's National Genius

by S. Ramakrishnan

More than one thousand two hundred years ago, a devout couple, *Śivaguru* and *Āryambā*, did severe penance to the *svayambhū linga* ensconced amidst the 'ghee-rock' at the hoary *Vadākkunnātha* temple at Trichur, entreating Lord *Śiva* for the blessings of a male offspring Pleased with the devotion of the ideal *dampati* (couple), the Lord appeared to them in a dream and gave them a difficult choice Whether they would wish to have a long-lived son but with average intellect or a brilliant but short-lived one They prayerfully opted for the latter

Thus was *Śaṅkara*, the wonder-boy, born in *Kāladi*, a remote village in Kerala, the foot of India He lived for just thirty-two years But, during the brief span, he did the work of several long lives His powerful mind, piercing intellect, rich personality, ceaseless activity and stupendous achievements were so astounding that he left an indelible impress on the minds and thoughts not only of his contemporaries but also of the succeeding generations, and it is very much in evidence even today. In fact, his name and fame, profound thoughts and amazing organizing power, bid fair to influence the lives and work of many, many more generations to come. Verily they are immortal.

History provides another outstanding personality, Alexander the Great who also died when he was thirty-two. One is struck with the polarity of power that existed in these two outstanding personages One was the son of a king, able strong, powerful and thorough, the other the son of a humble, pious *brāhmana* who did not possess any worldly wealth or power worth the name Yet, what a world of difference! One is

grudgingly remembered by students who have to cram their pages of history, the other, honoured, revered and eagerly studied by millions the world over One was the monarch of what mortal eyes could survey—men, wealth and territory, the other the monarch of the mind, heart and spirit of men, too subtle for mortal eyes

Why was the success and impact of one ephemeral and the other eternal? The answer lies in the motivating forces behind the careers of these two great men One was fired by the ambition to become the temporal leader of people and the ruler of the mundane world; the other was imbued with that divine compassion which exerts in the direction of providing enlightenment to the ignorant and suffering humanity and blossomed as a moral leader, a mentor of mankind and the spiritual ruler of the world The former exemplified the success of physical power, which is transient, the latter typified the triumph of soul-force, which is undying, everlasting. One became a world conqueror for a brief time; the other a world teacher (*Jagadguru*) for all time

When *Śankara* took birth, India was wallowing in the dark pit of decadence Buddhism and Jainism had lost their pristine glory. Corrupt practices had crept into the Buddhist folds; and the *Vihārā-s* tended to be no spiritual retreats at all The later followers of the Buddha revelled more in the criticism of doctrines than in the inculcation of anything positive *Śunya-vāda* (the doctrine of the void) had become something bereft of content, incapable of affording any constructive guidance to people. Nor could the people turn to the existing modes of *Hindūism* for solace and purposeful direction In the name of the *Vedā-s*, various sects of *Hindūism* had tried to propagate traverstіes rather than the truths of the *Vedik* religion The benign gods and goddesses were transformed into blood-thirsty ones, grovelling in the mire of sensuality and lust, and demanding awesome, cruel and barbaric homage from their misguided devotees

Śankara had a panoramic view of all these when he wrote in his *Bhagavad-Gītā-bhāṣya Atyanta viruddhāne-kartatvena gṛhyamānam upalabhya*—'finding the texts being interpreted in all sorts of contradictory and conflicting ways ' It was to silence the imposters who deliberately twisted the texts that he wrote the epoch-making *Prasthāna-traya-bhāṣya* and his other illuminating treatises The *Bhagavapāda's* revolutionary and rational commentaries undid at once the nihilistic Buddhists and the misinformed *Hindū* interpreters. *Śaṅkara* gave to the body of these texts the coherence of a system and thus won acceptability for his doctrine. He was no escapist retiring into his shell or into a cave in the forest A man of amazing energy and vast activity, *Śankara*, in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was a curious mixture of a philosopher and scholar, an agnostic and a mystic, a poet and a saint and, in addition to all this, a practical reformer and an able organizer

To *Śankara* we owe the true conception of *Svarājya*. He realised that the unity of India cannot be based on any kind of political kinship In the petty, suicidal, yet endemic dissension in the name of language, region and religion plaguing independent India, the political and economic unity fostered during our struggle for freedom has proved to be illusory Unity based on ethical and spiritual values, revitalised by *Śankara*, alone stands us in good stead today. That invisible but strong bond unifying India, which is discernible to any student of Indian history, is the edifice built on the firm foundation of an intellectually unassailable and unified system of philosophy known as *Advaita Vedānta Śankara* expounded the terse tenets of his philosophy in homely metaphors and similies, so that it could enter into the ken of even a layman He debated with relentless logic and outwitted the deluded, though scholarly, interpreters of *Vedik* texts He silenced the clamour against *Vedik* authority by convincing arguments His commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* of his *Paramaguru Gaudapāda*, which analyses the four modes of experience— the waking, the dream, the deep sleep and the *turīya*—remains almost the last word on philosophic

thought and is unparalleled either in the East or in the West for its comprehensive analysis of states of experiences

Śankara gave to the world the legacy of a beautiful, harmonised and strong fortress wherefrom reverberates intellectual integrity, and he installed atop the fortress a powerful *akṣayadīpa* wherefrom radiates spiritual ardour and surge forth soul-stirring devotional hymns like the *Bhaja Govindam, Saundarya Laharī, Śivānanda Laharī, Kanakadhārā Stotram, Mīnākṣī Stotram, Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram*, etc He sang, in exquisite words of matchless beauty and grandeur, the glories of the deities of all parts of India

Śankara was, indeed, a true leader of men, an organiser nonpareil His vision in establishing *mathā-s*—centres radiating India's ageless message of *Sanātana Dharma*—at various strategic points, his unbelievably extensive travels, in the bullock-cart age, from Kerala in the extreme South to *Badarīnātha* in the extreme North, to *Kāmarupa* in the East and *Dvārakā* in the West, meeting, discussing and debating with scholars, princes, pagans and people in all walks of life, many of whom went to him to scuttle and scoff but remained to deify and pray, his laying down the procedure of pilgrimages, making it incumbent on *yātrika-s* to travel from one end of the country to the other, and thus injecting into them an awareness of the underlying unity of India and of life, indeed, every facet of his life, work and activities is magnificent, inspiring and fundamental Truly, *Śankara* wrought one of the most comprehensive revolutions of tremendous magnitude in world history by the sheer force of intellect and moral energy

Twelve centuries have rolled by after *Śankara* Man has acquired from the experiences and experiments of millions of people a staggering store of knowledge His scientific temper has grown, his philosophic insights have increased, his weapons of logic have become sophisticated under the guidance of Wittgenstein and Russell But *Śankara's* writings have stood the test of time, undimmed by the blinding brilliance of every one

of these No wonder that the tide of spiritual vigour that emanated from *Śankarācārya* flooded the whole of India and swept off, hook, line and sinker, the dubious theories, the cobwebs of hideous practices, grotesque observances and tyrannical customs masquerading in the name of religion We moderns can hardly visualise the unique, intrepid, invigorating and intergrated personality that was *Śaṅkara Bhagavadpāda* The *Jagadguru* was a perfect combination and union of several great qualities of head and heart generally not found in a single minstrel of God As Sister Nivedita averred, in devotion he was like St Francis of Assissi, in intellect he was like Abelard, in dynamism and freedom, he was like Martin Luther, in imagination and efficiency, he was like Ignatius Loyola In fact, he was all these, united and exemplified in one person

Śrī Ādi Śankarācārya resurrected the India of the ages, he reawakened India's national genius, he represented—and continues to represent—the dazzling, effulgent efflorescence of *Bhāratavarsa*

Jaya Jaya Śankara

Chapter I

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA UP TO THE TIME OF *ŚAṄKARA*

The Age of *Vedā-s*

The *Vedā-s* are the earliest sources of information on Indian thought They are supposed to have emerged out of *Om*. They contain the most astonishing record of the march of the human mind from the worship of the forces of nature to the realisation of the Absolute spirit This is, indeed, a happy pilgrimage In the *Ṛg Veda* we find inspiration in the strength of action, in the *Yajur Veda*, the power of will, in the *Sāma Veda*, that of knowledge, and in the *Atharva Veda*, that of the menial functions of life

We cannot precisely estimate the age of the *Vedā-s*, yet some scholars estimate it to be anywhere around 4,000 to 2,500 B C It will be of interest to look briefly into the various developments that took place from the *Vedik* age up to the time of *Śankara* who, according to general acceptance by scholars, was born in A D. 788 A truly religious mind does not bother much for the history of religion, but even an imperfect historical treatment of a subject has its own value For purpose of analysis, the earlier period consisting of about 1,500 years i e , from 2000 to 500 B.C , may be called as the *Vedik* age In the period of the early hymns there was nothing other than the forces of nature to be worshipped This led to the personification of these forces Nevertheless, there was a resolute search for a unity behind these forces, hence, we find so many idols created during this time that one god shades

away into another Some of the popular names include *Viśvakarmā*, the chief architect of the universe, *Prajāpati*, lord of creatures, *Brahmanaspati*, lord of devotion, etc

The *Mantrā-s* and *Brāhmanā-s* An important development in this age was the conception of the cosmic order—*rta* Later the cosmic order was identified with a moral order It was believed that the *rta* was maintained by the offering of sacrifices. This is the period of the *Mantrā-s* (hymns or religions songs contained in the *Vedā-s*) Gradually sacrifices gained prominence, and the period of the *Brāhmanā-s* (section of the *Vedā-s* dealing with rites and rituals) saw a purely sacrificial religion of a mechanical nature and a special class of professional priests who alone could officiate at them. This period marks the emergence of *varnā-s* (classes) and *āśramā-s* (stages of life) It was only natural that in this period the priests became supreme and powerful in society

The age of the *Upaniṣad-s*

Literally meaning 'secret teaching, the *Upaniṣad-s* embody a number of treatises which represent the cream of *Vedik* thought. In broad terms their teaching marks a reaction against the ritualism of the *brāhmanā-s* The first *Hindū* renaissance is seen in the age of the *Upaniṣad-s* It was in this age that the foundations of *Hindūism* were truly laid, all the later developments were only superstructures built on this foundation The childish delight in power and possession of the earlier age gave place to true spiritual manhood *Jñāna* took the place of *Yajña* *Karma* was given a wider meaning than mere ritual *Varnā-s* and *āśramā-s* were pushed into the background. But by its very nature this religion was severely individualistic, hence, it could be only the religion of the few

Philosophy The eternal impersonal Absolute is the ultimate Reality, this, the *Upanisad-s* call *Brahman* Of this we have no conceptual knowledge *Māyā* is the power by which that

Reality appears to us as the changing Universe under conditions of time and space without actually undergoing any changes in Itself. The cause-and-effect relationship cannot be applied to the Absolute and the created universe. The Spirit in man is identical with this absolute Supreme Spirit Our suffering is due to our not realising this identity *Mokṣa* or liberation from suffering can be had through *Jñāna*, realisation as a result of *Dhyāna* on the Absolute *Karma* and *Upāsanā* are vital aids in the process

These are in brief the cardinal principles of *Advaita* philosophy And the first systematic exponent of this philosophy was *Gauḍapāda* He was the teacher of *Govindapāda* who became the *guru* of *Śankara* *Śankara* did not propound a new philosophy of his own, he only expounded what was detailed in the *Upaniṣad-s*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtrā*-s

The Period of Transition

The time separating the *Vedik* period from the period of emergence of the system of Indian thought may be called the period of transition In this period, the different currents of *Vedik* thought flourished, and new schools of religion and philosophy emerged. It was also a period of literary importance The end of the *Upaniṣadik* age i.e., about the 6th century B.C., saw the nucleus of the great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* The grammars of *Yakṣa* and *Pāṇinī* were written Some historian hold that the *Brāhmī* script of forty-six letters, arranged scientifically, was developed in this period The popular religion of this time is picturised in the *Kalpa*, *Śrauta*, *Gṛhya* and *Dharma Sūtrā-s* The insistence on sacrifices and rituals continued and was futher developed, conducting of rituals became a profession The *Vedik* scrifices became elaborate and complicated As a consequence, temples sprang up More emphasis was placed on *varnā-s* and *āśramā-s* A number of theories on metaphysics were put forth It was then that Jainism and Buddhism came up as reforming sects

Jainism

This, a very old non-*Vedik* religion, arose in the later *Vedik* period and was revitalised by *Vardhamāna Mahāvīra* in the 6th century B C On the practical side *Jainism* upheld asceticism and non-voilence According to it the goal of life is to attain Omniscience The *Jain*-way to *nirvāna* is

1 Right faith,
2 Right knowledge, and
3 Right conduct

These are called the *ratnatraya* or *tri-ratna* (three jewels). For a house-holder the right conduct consists in ·

1 *Ahiṁsā*,
2 *Satya*,
3 *Asteya*;
4. *Brahmacarya*; and
5 *Aparigraha*.

These are the *anuvratā-s*. But for a monk the right conduct consists of the five *mahāvratā-s*. *Brahmacarya* and *aparigraha* for a householder mean only chastity and non-attachment, but for a *sannyāsin*, they mean absolute celibacy and complete renunciation

Buddhism

The *Buddhā* only restated the thought of the *Upaniṣad-s* He spread only the ideals of the orthodox religion, but repudiated the ascendancy of the priests and the elaborate ritualism Consequently, more emphasis was placed on morality Dr Radhakrishnan rightly claims 'He was the wisest and greatest and the best of the *Hindū*-s ' Thus the emergence of *Buddhism* may be regarded as the second renaissance of *Hindūism*

The *Buddha's* teachings were more practical in the sense that they were more concerned with providing a remedy for the ills of life than with discussions on the metaphysical questions This had a serious consequence His later followers had considerable difference of opinion about the basic metaphysical questions Certain perversions of the basic doctrines emerged, such as the theories of *anitya*, *anātmā* and *nirvāna* The negative side of life was over-emphasised with no corresponding emphasis on their positive counterpart *Nirvāna* meant annihilation as against the *Upanisadik* meaning of liberation from the thraldom of finitude

The *Buddha's* teaching consists of the Four *Āryan* Truths and the Eight *Āryan* Paths The Four Truths are

1 Life is evil
2. Ignorance is the source of evil
3 Evil can be overcome
4 Right knowledge is the means of removing evil

To attain the goal it commended the discipline known as the Eightfold Path. The eight elements of the discipline are

1 Right belief
2 Right aim
3 Right speech
4 Right action
5 Right living
6 Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8 Right contemplation

As a natural consequence *Buddhist sādhanā* grew into a regimental, cold, self-culture, against the *Hindū* joyous union

The State of *Hindūism*

Both *Jainism* and *Buddhism* claimed large followers from time to time, but the majority of the *Hindū-s* still clung to *Brāhmanical Hindūism* The significant developments around 200 B C were the development of the creeds of *Śaivism* and *Vaiṣṇavism* This period, from the birth of the *Buddhā* to 200 B C, may be considered as the age of the systematic development of *Vedāngā-s,* the *Śāstrā-s, Kautilyā's Artha Śāstra, Jātaka* tales, etc

There were many significant developments upto about the 3rd century A D, the most important being the code of *Manu* The *Mahāgaṇa* scripture of this period (*Saddharma Pundarīka*) is known to be a parallel to the *Bhagavad-Gītā* A number of *Purānā-s* were written The religion of the *Upaniṣad-s* was thus made simple for the understanding of the common people and was more widely accepted This can be seen as a reaction to the Buddhist fanaticism The six schools of philosophy emerged distinctly The famous literature of this age include *Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya* and *Bhārata*'s *Nātyaśastra*

Epics and *Purāṇā-s*—The subsequent years saw the growing popularity of the Epics and *Purānā-s* They were the Bible of the common people and formed the source of half of the vernacular literature

One of the significant developments in the advance of religious thought in the *Purānā-s* was the doctrine of *Avatārā-s* and the concept of *Śakti* personified as the Mother Goddess *Śaktism* gave rise to a mass of religious literature known as the *Tantrā-s* Unlike the *Purānā-s* they contain more of ritualistic matter and less of legend and history The period up to about the 7th century A D may be called the period of the *Purāṇā-s* and *Darśanā-s* This period saw the compilation of eighteen great *Purānā-s,* the famous dramas of *Bhāsa* and *Kālidāsa* and other commendable masterpieces like the

mathematical treatise of *Āryabhaṭṭa*, the astronomical treatise of *Varāhamitra*, etc The *Śilpaśāstra* is also ascribed to this period.

Śaṅkara

About the middle of the 7th century A.D. *Buddhism* was in a state of decline. Its final defeat is attributed to *Kumārila Bhatta* and *Śaṅkarācārya* *Kumārila* was the founder of the *Bhattapada* School of *Karma-Mīmāmsā* and was a great opponent of *Buddhism*. For his stand, he took the *Vedā-s* and the *Vedik* rites as the basis *Śankara* who lived in the later part of the 8th century and the earlier part of the 9th century completed the work started by *Kumārila*, and much more *Śankara* assimilated some of the good points of *Buddhism* Never deploring the *Vedik* rites and rituals, he purified them by removing those parts which were misused He erected the edifice of *Advaita* and established four monasteries as centres of religious teaching and missionary work. These *mathā-s*, to this date, are the sources of light and wisdom to millions of *Hindū-s*

The Age which saw *Śaṅkara* :

The age which saw the advent of *Śankara* was a dark period of unrest and strife. The country was divided into a number of principalities which had very little in common between them There were literalists and ritualists, on the one hand, who held to the letter of the scriptures missing their message, while on the other, there were powerful nihilists and iconoclasts ready to tear and destroy all that was sacred and ancient Clinging to narrow conceptions of godhood and swayed by fanaticism, they used religion as a weapon of aggression instead of finding in it the solace of life The society was infested with heinous practices which were given religious sanction by the culturally decayed populace This was brought about by the uncultured and uneducated mass of people who had embraced *Buddhism* but who could not appreciate or

live up to the great and noble ideals preached by the Buddha The land had no religious Master, and the population drifted without a goal, stagnating in innumerable sects, each championing its own narrow, limited viewpoint to the exclusion of all others

India was thus through great intellectual, spiritual and social turmoil *Vedik* religion had become mere performance of elaborate rituals as advocated by the *Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā*, which took into consideration only the *Brāhmana* portion of the *Vedik* lore *Buddhism* was past its heyday of freshness and purity, and had degenerated into innumerable philosophical schools and as many corrupt religious practices Jainism was getting a lot of royal partonage and *Hindūism* had developed a number of intolerant sects. Squabbles, dissensions and corruption prevailed in the name of religion It was into such an age of fuming confusion, chaotic intellectual anarchy and social decadence that *Bhagavān Śankara* was born to destroy the wicked and the crooked ways of thinking, establish the *Sanātana Dharma*, and impart to it the life-giving philosophy of the Non-dual *Brahman* of the *Upanisad-s*

Controversies on the Period of *Śaṅkara* :

Though it has been accepted by almost all that *Śankara*'s birth was in A.D. 788, there are various opinions regarding the exact year of his birth. A few arguments for and against this date are given below

1 *Vācaspati Miśra* who had commented on *Śaṅkara*'s work wrote his book *Nyāya-sūcī-nibandham* in A D. 841 Therefore, *Śankara* lived before that time

2 There is evidence that *Dharma Kīrti* lived during A D 695 The Chinese traveller, Fa-Hian mentions in A D 695 that *Dharma Kīrti* was his contemporary *Śaṅkara* had quoted *Dharma Kīrti's* statements in his *Bhāsya* on the *Brahma Sūtrā-s* and negated his

arguments. Hence *Sankara*'s time was later than A.D. 695

3 Mention is made of *Vidyānanda Ācārya* in *Jinasena*'s book, *Harivaṁśa*, which is believed to have been written in A D 783 *Vidyānanda* quotes *Sureśvarācārya*'s *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya-vārttika* (commentary on *Śankara*'s *Bhāṣya* on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*) So, *Śankara* lived before A.D. 783

4 *Śreekānta* quotes in his book *Yoga-prakāra*, presumed to have been written in A D 768, contain statements of *Śankara* Therefore, *Śankara* lived before A.D. 768.

5 *Śankara* in his *Bhāṣya* points out the town of *Pātaliputra* as an example to illustrate a statement. *Pātaliputra* was destroyed in floods in A.D 750 Since he could not have employed the description of a destroyed city to illustrate his point, the *Bhāṣya* was written before A D 750 and, therefore, *Śankara* lived before that time.

6 In the book *Śankara Paddhati*, *Śankara* is said to have attained *samādhī* in *Śāka* year 642 (corresponding to A D. 720)

7 Lokmanya Tilak, in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, has tried to establish that *Śankara* was born in A D 688

8 Western scholars have opined that *Śankara* was born in A D 788, and their historians also accept this statement

9 In the *Jagadguru-paramparā Stotram* of *Śringerī Matha*, it is observed that *Śankara* was born in *Kāli Varsa* 3889, established the *mutha* at the age of 20, and attained *samādhī* in 3921, which correspond to A D 788, 808 and 820, respectively

10 It has been contended that the assumption of *Śankara*'s birth in A D 788 is wrong The controversy seems to

have arisen owing to the fact of confusing him with *Dhīra Śaṅkarendra Sarasvatī*, the 38th *Jagadguru* of *Kāñcī*, also called *Abhinava Śaṅkara*, who ascended the *Pītha* in A.D. 788.

11 The records of the *Govardhan Matha* at *Jagannātha Purī*, of the *Śāradā Maṭha* at *Dvārakā*, and of the *Kāñcī Kāmakoṭī Maṭha*, all point to 509 B.C as the date of birth of *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* The genealogical tree of the kings of Nepal refers to the visit to that country of *Śankarācārya* in the 6th century (B C ?)

Chapter II

EARLY LIFE

Birth

Śankara was born about twelve centuries ago at *Kāladi*, a remote village on the banks of the river *Periyāra* (referred to as '*Pūrṇa*' in the scriptures) in Kerala. An interesting anecdote describes his birth. His parents, *Śivaguru* and *Aryambā*, a pious couple, were without a child for a long time. They observed various austerities and undertook a pilgrimage to the *Śiva* temple at *Vrśacala* (believed to be the great *Śiva* temple at *Trichūr* (present *Tirruvananthāpuram*), Central Kerala). They spent the day at the temple worshipping Lord *Śiva*. Pleased with their devotion, the Lord appeared to them in a dream and asked whether they would like to have a brilliant boy who would have only a short life, or a dull-headed one with long life. The wise couple opted for the former. Full of joy, they returned to their house at *Kālaḍi* and spent their days in worship and meditation of Lord *Śiva*, and in serving the learned, the aged and the poor. Within a year, *Aryambā* gave birth to a beautiful son.

The child was born on a Sunday, the *Śukla Pañcamī* day in the month of *Vaiśākha* when the constellation of Taurus was in ascendant (*Vrsabha lagnam*) with *Sūrya* and *Budha* in *Mesa*, *śukra* in *Vṛṣabha*, *Candra* in *Karkataka* (*Punarvasu nakṣatra*), *Śani* in *Tulā*, *Guru* in *Vṛscika* and *Kuja* in *Makara rāśi-s*.

	Sūrya *Budha*	*Lagna* *Śukra*	
	Ādi Śankara		*Candra*
Kuja			
	Guru	*Śani*	

The Astrological Chart

The child had divine signs on its body which are described thus

'मूर्धनि हिमकर चिह्नं निटिले नडनाडकं अंसयोः शूलम् ।
वपुषे स्फटिकसवर्ण प्राज्ञास्तं मनिरे शंभुम्' ॥

'The learned and the wise saw the brilliance of the moon on his head, on his forehead the sign of the divine eye (of *Śiva*), his shoulder had the impress of the trident (*triśūla*), his body was resplendent like the crystal; verily, he looked like *Śambhū* (Lord *Śiva*) Himself walking in the world in human form '

The parents named him *Śankara* in grateful remembrance of the Lord's grace And the body lived up to his name which meant 'bestower of auspiciousness' (*śam karoti iti Śankara*)

Childhood and Education

Śankara was a prodigy even as a child and exhibited uncommon intelligence He was initiated into the study of the alphabets (*akṣarābhyāsa*) at the age of three, soon he was able to read and even understand whole books His father wished to send him to a *gurukula* school for further studies after

performıng hıs *upanayanam* (ınvestıture of the sacred thread). But, as fate would have ıt, *Śıvaguru* passed away when *Śaṅkara* was three years old *Aryambā* performed the rıtual of ınvestıng *Śankara* wıth the sacred thread wıth the help of relatıves at the age of five, and sent hım to *gurukula* school *Śankara* mastered all the lores wıth surprısıng swıftness, wıthın about three years It ıs saıd that at the young age of sıx *Śankara* composed a book, *Bālabodha-Samgraha* Many people have doubted thıs possıbılıty and scholars have trıed to ıterpret ıt dıfferently Thıs phenomenon has been explaıned by *Sant Jñāneśvara* thus 'A small bodıly form appears and the dawn of Self-knowledge breaks, lıke the mornıng lıght ın the advance of the Sun Then, wıthout attaınıng any age or any partıcular stage of lıfe, omnıscıence woos the person even ın hıs chıldhood Due to hıs possessıon of an ıntellect, whıch has rıpened ın the prevıous lıves, the mınd ıtself ıssues forth all lores, and all the scıences flow automatıcally from hıs lıfe '

Kaṇakadhārā

On one of those days durıng hıs *gurukula* educatıon the boy, *Śankara*, went to a house, as was usual wıth *Brahmacārī-s*, to receıve hıs *bhıkaṣā* (alms) The hostess was a kındly *brāhmana* lady, but was very poor She had nothıng to offer except an *amlaka* as her humble *bhıkṣā* to *Śankara* He was vısıbly moved by the poverty as well as the sıncerıty of the lady and, out of compassıon, ınvoked Goddess *Lakṣmī* through a hymn whıch he sang extempore on the spot The Goddess answered hıs call and showered ınto the house golden *amlakā-s* Thıs prayer of *Śankara* has come down to us as the *Kanakadhārā Stotram*, and ıts daıly repetıtıon ıs belıeved to be an effectıve cure for poverty

Diverting the River's Course

At the age of eıght, *Śankara* completed hıs formal educatıon at the *gurukula* and returned to hıs own house He

served and looked after his mother, and continued the study of all kinds of books, of which his father had a large collection Gradually, his genius was known to all people in the neighbourhood and his fame spread far and near

In those days, the river *Pūrṇa* was not flowing close to *Kāladi* His mother had, therefore, to go a long way every day to take her bath in the river. One day, *Śankara*, perturbed that his mother was unusually late in returning from her bath, went in search of her and found her lying unconscious on the way due to exhaustion He gave her first aid and brought her home That day he prayed fervently to the Lord and He should make the river flow by the side of his house so that his mother would not have to take long walks for her daily bath And lo! the next morning the wonder of wonders happened, the river *Pūrna* was flowing gently by the side of *Śankara*'s house

The King's Visit

On account of his innate genius and extraordinary learning, *Śankara* became the chief object of admiration and reverence His name and fame spread like widfire Many learned persons came to meet the child prodigy and get enlightened on spiritual matters King *Rājaśekhara*, who was ruling Kerala at that time, also came to hear about *Śankara*. He paid a visit to *Kāladi* and was very much impressed by *Śankara* The King, who was also a man of letters, had composed three books, and he read them out to *Śankara* who, in turn, appreciated the literary talent of the King and congratulated him.

Sannyāsa

Śankara was mentally prepared to embrace *sannyāsa*. When he conveyed his desire to his mother, she did not approved of it Like a true son, he did not go against her wishes immediately, but hoped that some day he would be granted his desire

One day, *Śankara* went along with his mother to take bath in the river When he was about to take a dip, a crocodile caught hold of his leg and started pulling him into deeper waters. Startled, he cried out to his mother to save him She could not do anything from the shore where she was standing As the crocodile's drag became irresistible, *Śankara* cried out, 'Oh mother, I am going into jaws of death. At this moment at least, to save my soul, kindly grant me my request to become an ascetic' *Aryambā,* reconciling herself to the inevitable, immediately consented to her son's wish *Śaṅkara* loudly chanted three times '*samnyastoham*' (I have renounced) The crocodile instantly let him go, and he came up to the shore and greeted his mother Now that he had obtained his mother's consent to take to *sannyāsa,* he requested her to allow him to go out and seek a *guru* to initiate him into the holy order The truthful mother kept her word, though her mind was pining with the grief of separation from her beloved and only child She, however, took a promise from *Śankara* that he would come back to her at the time of her death and perform the last rites *Śankara* gladly acceded to her request

The crocodile incident is perhaps an allegory It is interpreted thus the river stands for *samsāra* (the river of life, of births and deaths); the crocodile is *māyā,* living in that river and preying on the *jīvā-s* (the individuals), escape from the clutches of this crocodile can be made only through renunciation, hence the crocodile, the illusory power, left *Śankara* free of its hold when he declared, *Samnyastoham,* meaning, 'I have renounced'

Leaving his mother in the loving care of his relatives and in the protecting hands of the Lord, *Śankara* set out all alone in search of a *guru* Just before he left his home, *Śankara* removed the idol of *Śrī Krsna* from the temple right on the banks of the river where his mother used to pray every day and reconsecrated it in a new temple a little away from the river, so that it would be safe from the floods This temple exists even today at *Kāladi*

There is also an anecdote that just before he left his village, *Śaṅkara* saw Lord *Acyuta* in a dream, who directed him to go to the great ascetic, *Śrī Govindapāda Ācārya*, at *Omkāranātha* *Śaṅkara* is believed to have composed the hymn *Acyuta Astakam* in praise of the Lord at this time

In Search of the *Guru*

The young ascetic, *Śankara*, walked on and on towards the North. He had come to know that the great *Ṛṣi*, *Govindapāda*, lived in a cave on the banks of the river *Narmadā* near the famous pilgrimage centre of *Omkāranātha*, and directed his steps towards this place *Śaṅkara* was just eight years old then and travelled all alone. He would do his prayers and ablutions every day at dawn and dusk, would seek *bhiksā* at midday from any house, and rest under a wayside tree or in a temple or a pilgrims' shelter during nights Day after day he walked with a cheerful and determined countenance

Thus, while crossing villages and countries one after another, one day *Śankara* came upon an open place amidst deep forests, devoid of all human life The sun was too hot and he decided to rest under a tree He had just composed himself and relaxed when he witnessed a strange sight A group of frogs, which had been basking in the midday sun, were about to jump back into the waters from the rock where they had been sitting peacefully, but which had become too hot for them, when suddenly a huge cobra crept from behind the rock and spread out its huge hood, casting a cool shade over the frogs The frogs enjoyed the hospitable gesture of the cobra, and after some time plunged into the waters, the cobra folded back its hood and disappeared from view The keen intellect of *Śankara* did not let the incident pass by without further thought He argued within himself that such a scene of love between two varieties of creatures which were by nature inimical to each other could not take place except in the vicinity of some great *tapasvī* He set out to enquire about the importance and greatness of the place,

and met an old ascetic living alone in a nearby hamlet. The ascetic welcomed *Śankara* and told him that the place was sanctified by the penance of the great *Maharṣi Rṣya Śrngā*, whose *āśrama* had existed there once upon a time. A benign thought flashed in *Śankara*'s mind that, in future, if he ever chanced to make a *matha* or *āśrama*, he would have it in this place. Much later, after about ten years, *Śaṅkara* passed through the same spot along with his disciples, crowned with the glorious victory of his mission. He established his first *matha* here, which became famous in later years as the *Śrngerī Matha*.

Śankara continued his trek in search of his preceptor and, after walking for two months on end, reached the banks of the river *Narmadā* and the pilgrim centre of *Omkāranātha*. He enquired about *guru Govindapāda*, but none could say where he lived, no one seemed to know him. Some local people, however, stated that a group of *Mahātmā-s* lived near a cave and perhaps they could throw some light on the matter. *Śankara* reached the place where the *Mahātmā-s* lived and enquired about *guru Govidapāda*. They too did not know who he was, but mentioned that a great *Mahātmā* had been deeply immersed in meditation without a break for a long time in a small cave nearby, and that they were waiting for the day when he would wake up from his meditation so that they could pay their respects to him. *Śankara* thereupon entered the cave and started singing a hymn in praise of the *guru*. Gradually, the *Mahātmā* woke up from *samādhī*, and with his eyes still closed, enquired who he (*Śankara*) was. *Śankara* then sang a hymn: 'I am not earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor space, nor a combination of all these which are within the realm of change, but the One Changeless *Śiva* am I. .' Thus he described his true identity with the Supreme Reality in ten waves of thought, which is now known as *Daśa Śloki*.* The *Mahātmā* opened his eyes and beheld the form of the young ascetic prostrating at his feet. The great *Yogī*, who was none

---

Incorporated as Chapter 9 in this Book. Ed.

other than *guru Govindapāda* himself, was overcome with joy to see a fully realised soul in *Śankara* He acceded to *Śankara*'s request to initiated him into *Brahma-vidyā* and, in due course, the training began. *Śankara* stayed there with the *guru* for full three years and mastered all scriptures and *Yogik* techniques.

Flood in the *Narmadā*

During his stay with *guru Govindapāda* a strange incident occured It was rainy season, and there was a sudden flood in the river *Narmadā* The flood waters rose steadily and devoured a number of trees and gardens A time came when it even threatened to enter the cave where the *guru* stayed At that moment, the *guru* was immersed in deep *samādhī* and the disciples did not dare to disturb him, yet, they could not overlook the danger that was threatening him When all were visibly agitated, *Śankara* took his *kamandalu* and placed it at the entrance to the cave, saying that it would absorb into itself all the flood waters and that no danger would befall the *guru* No sooner had the waters reached the mouth of the *kamandalu* than it suddenly started receding and, in minutes, the river was back again in its normal course The spectators were dazed by the strange turn of events They broke the news to the Master as soon as he came out of his meditation *Guru Govindapāda* was very happy at *Śankara*'s feat and blessed him saying, 'Just as you contained the flood waters in your *kamandalu,* you should write commentaries on the scriptures compresssing into them the essence of all the *Vedā-s* By this work you will gain eternal glory ' *Śankara* prostrated at the Master's feet

It is said that at the end of his short but intense study, *guru Govindapāda* wished to test *Śankara*, and asked him to write a commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Visnu Sahasranāmā* He accomplished this great task with distinction and thus the very first work of *Śankara,* the *Upaniṣadik* commentator, came to light After some months, one day, the *guru* summoned *Śankara* and asked him what he desired *Śankara* replied that all that he

desired was to immerse himself in meditation, and stay constantly in the Supreme State of perfect Bliss The *guru*, however, reminded him that he had not carried out his task and that he should proceed to *Kāśī* and after having prayed there at the presence of Lord *Viśvanātha*, wait for further commands from Him *Guru Govindapāda*, thereafter, sat in meditation, and within a short time gave up his physical body and attained *Mahāsamādhī* *Śankara* and other disciples took the body and, as per the custom, immersed it in the river

At *Kāśī*

In accordance with the command of his *guru*, *Śankara* started for *Kāśī* He crossed the *Vindhyā* mountains and the kingdoms of *Haihayā*, *Chedī* and *Kausambī*, and reached the banks of the *Yamunā*. Following the course of the *Yamunā*, he reached *Prayāga*, and travelling along the blanks of the *Gangā*, arrived at *Kāśī* He took up abode near the *Viśvanātha* temple at the famous *Manikarnikā Ghāt* and spent his time in meditation and in explaining the *Vedāntik* texts and teaching the scriptures At *Kāśī*, *Śankara*, with extreme self-confidence, propounded the doctrine '*Brahman*, the ultimate All, is the only Reality, the only means to lead us to the goal of Realisation is to overcome all sense-attractions ' The learned *paṇḍitā-s* were stirred to their depths as much by the novelty of the doctrine as by the power and eloquence of the young ascetic

A number of inquisitive persons came to *Śaṅkara* and listened to his discourses Some of them who wished to pursue the *Vedāntik* studies seriously became his disciples and stayed with him One among them was a young man named *Sanandana* from the kingdom of *Cholā* in South India He was very devoted to his teacher In later years he became famous as *Padmapāda* The admirers, disciples and devotees of *Śankara*, who included learned *panditā-s* and priests, conferred on him the title of *Ācārya*, meaning, the teacher Thus, *Śankara* became *Śankarācārya* He was then barely twelve years old

Who is untouchable?

One day, while he was returning from his morning ablutions from the *Gangā* in the early hours of dawn, a low-caste man (*candāla*) was seen blocking his way with his four pet dogs *Śankara* accosted him and asked him to move away The non-chalant *Candāla* asked what it was that *Śankara* wanted to move away from the path—the *Candāla's* body or his Spirit He added 'O Distinguished Ascetic! You have established that the Absolute is everywhere, in you and me, and yet you shrink from me as if I am different. Is it this body which is mine, built up of food, that you wish to keep at a distance from that body which is also built up of food, or do you wish to separate Pure Awareness, which is present here, from the same Awareness present there? Is there any difference in the sun reflected in the water of the holy Ganges and that which is reflected in a dirty pool in the street of *Candālā-s* '

The *Ācārya* immediately recognised his folly His eyes were opened and, seeing the Absolute even in the lowliest of the lowly, he bowed low to the *Candāla* He then composed five verses on the spot, saying that whoever he be, he who exhibited such equanimity of perception was indeed his *guru*, even though he be a *Candāla*, thus establishing that there were no distinction in the Pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss i e , *Brahman* (These verses are known as *Manīṣā Pañcakam*) And lo! the *Candāla* disappeared from view and there stood in front of *Śankara*, Lord *Śiva* Himself in all His glory! He blessed *Śankara* and directed him to eradicate all false and supersititious ideologies that plagued the country then, by composing commentaries for the scriptures and spreading their true message among mankind The divine vision slowly disappeared and *Śankara* returned to his abode full of ecstatic cheer and a sense of glorious satisfaction He thought of his next course of action and decided to retire to *Badrikāśrama* to compose the commentaries

The Great Work

The *Ācārya* started his long journey to *Badarikāśrama* along with a few disciples who always followed him. As they passed through various kingdoms *en route*, the kings and other learned people accorded them warm welcome and saw their comforts and requirements. In course of time, they reached *Jyotirdhāma* (present *Jośīmatha*) where the king received them with due respect. From there, they reached their destination, *Badarikāśrama*, where all facilities not only for food, fuel and accommodation, but also for the regular supply of palmyrah leaves etc., for writing were made available by the king of *Jyotirdhāma*.

At *Badarikāśrama*, the *Ācārya* recovered the idol of Lord *Nārāyana* from the *Nārada Kunda* in the river *Alakanandā* and reinstalled it in the temple there with due ceremony. He directed that a *Nambūdirī brāhmana* from Kerala should be appointed for conducting regular worship at the temple and prescribed the rules for the *pūjā*. The king of *Jyotirdhāma* carried out the instructions. The tradition has continued ever since, and even now the *Rāval* (priest) of *Badarināthа* is a *Nambūdirī* from Kerala.

The *Ācārya* and his disciples stayed at *Badarikāśrama* for four years and completed the work of writing commentaries on fifteen books, namely, the *Brahma-sūtrā-s*, twelve *Upanisad-s*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* and *Sanat Sujātīyam*. Of these, the *Brahma-sūtrā-s*, *Upaniṣad-s* and *Bhagavad-Gītā* together are called by the name *Prasthāna-trayī*. The *Brahma-sūtrā-s* are known as *Nayāya-prasthāna* (institute of tradition). Writing commentatries on these scriptures was by no means an easy task. These are laden with such a wealth of details, elaborate arguments, assertions and negations precipitating finally into crystal clear conclusion that even a whole lifetime falls short for a proper study of them. Apart from composing commentaries, the *Ācārya* devoted time every day for teaching the disciples,

meeting various visitors and religious leaders, clarifying their doubts and enhancing their knowledge One of the regular visitors was the king of *Jyotirdhāma* himself With the help of the *Ācārya*, the king learnt the basic tenets of *Hindūism* and re-established the age-old traditions of worship and *Vedik* culture which had sunk low at that time

Down to the Plains

The *Ācārya*, after completing the manuscripts of his works, moved down to the plains with his disciples From then onwards, the story of *Śankara* is one of continuous journeying from place to place throughout the country Wherever he went, he won over eminent scholars of the other systems of philosophy none could stand against his vast education His fame spread through all centres of learning and people felt confident that now a true leader had come to revitalise *Hindūism* From *Badarikāśrama*, *Śankara* came down to *Kedāranātha* and *Uttarakāśī* At *Uttarakāśī*, he felt very much at ease and became more and more immersed in long meditations, spending his time in a mood of indifference to all mundane activities

Veda Vyāsa's Test

It is said that during this time an old *brāhmana* used to come to see *Śankara* daily and enter into arguments with him regarding the exact import of certain aphorisms of the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* (on the first *sūtra* of the first section in chapter 3) This went on for many days continuously *Padmapāda*, *Śankara*'s devoted disciple, observed that the old *brāhmana* was not an ordinary person, he conveyed his doubts to the *Ācārya* The next day when the old *brāhmana* came for a fresh session of discussions, *Śankara* requested him to reveal his identity The *brāhmana* cast away his disguise and appeared in his true form He was none other than *Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa* himself The *Ācārya* was overcome with joy and prostrated at the feet of the

Guru of all *gurū-s Vyāsa* conceded that his ideals have been faithfully interpreted by *Śankara* in his commentaries and directed him to go to the plains and win over those who were steeped in ritualism, like *Kumārila Bhaṭṭa* and his followers, and establish the supremecy of *Vedāntik* knowledge *Śankara* was at that time, sixteen years old and was about to complete the span of life allotted to him. *Vyāsa* granted him a further extension of sixteen years of life to fulfil the above mission.

Śaṅkara with his disciples continued his journey further, and moving down along the course of the river *Yamunā*, visited on the way a number of holy places like *Kurukṣetra, Indraprastha, Vṛndāvana* and *Mathurā* In course of time they reached *Prayāga*, where *Kumārila Bhatta* lived

Kumārila Bhaṭṭa

Kumārila Bhatta was a great champion of *Pūrva Mīmāmsā* and a confirmed ritualist After he had his studies in the *gurukula* along with other *brāhmana* boys, he came out with complete knowledge of all *Śāstrā-s*. He made a special study of the *Pūrva Mīmāmsā Śāstra*, advocating the path of knowledge He wanted to check the onslaught on the *Vedik* religion by the *Buddhists* who were strong at that time They did not admit a *brāhmana* into their fold In order to learn their philosophy, *Kumārila* disguised himself as a monk and enrolled as a disciple of their *guru*, under whom he mastered the tenets of *Buddhist* philosophy However, his disguise came to light and the *Buddhist guru* wanted to do away with *Kumārila* mortally, so that he might not run away with the secrets A plot was worked out to throw *Kumārila* from the terrace When *Kumārila* got wind of this, it was too late, but he remembered the *Vedā-s* and consoled himself that if the *Vedā-s* were true revelations, they could save him from death In spite of his being hurled from the top, he escaped unhurt He then became an uncompromising opponent of *Buddhism* as was practised at that time and worked for its annihilation He was, however, unhappy, for a feeling of

guilt overtook him because of the great sin of *guru-dośa* which he had committed by his breach of trust As a *prayaścita*, he wanted to burn himself in the *tusānala* (burning chaff). When *Śankara* came to him, he had entered the funeral pyre In view of his firm determination for self-immolation, he could not undertake a debate with *Śaṅkara*, but instead asked *Śankara* to meet *Viśvarūpa* one of his disciples. *Kumārila* then requested *Śankara* to chant the *Tāraka-mantra* so that he could meet with his end peacefully *Śankara* complied with the request and *Kumārila* gave up his body listening to *Śankara*'s chanting

Viśvarūpa (Maṇḍana Miśra)

According to *Kumārila*'s advice, *Śankara* and his disciples started for *Mahiśmati* on the northern banks of the river *Narmadā* where *Viśvarūpa* lived Walking for more than a month they reached their destination. On the outskirts of the village they met some ladies drawing water from a common well, and enquired of them where *Viśvarūpa* lived They told *Śankara* to look out for a big house with a tall gate and walls all around, where the parrots living on the nearby trees could be heard constantly repeating *Vedik mantrā-s* *Śaṅkara* was amused by the strange description of the house and the directions to locate it He asked his disciples to wait at the river bank and went alone in search of the house.

He soon came upon the house, but found that the gate was locked and there was no way of intimating the household of his arrival and his intention to meet *Viśvarūpa*. He thought for a while, and decided to force himself in. With his *Yogik* power, *Śankara* lifted himself into the air and landed in the inner courtyard of the spacious house *Viśvarūpa*, who was at that time making elaborate preparations for the *Śrādha* ceremony of his father, was taken aback by the sight of a sprightly young boy of about sixteen years, with a clean-shaven head and ochre robes, descending from the sky He was not particularly happy

with the sight, and accosted the young ascetic sarcastically thus: 'From where are you, O, clean-shaven one?' (*kuto muṇḍī*) The words, uttered in *Saṁskṛta*, could also be interpreted to mean 'How far have you shaved?' *Śankara* saw the sarcasm on the face of *Viśvarūpa* and, deciding to have a little joke with him, replied in a cool voice, 'Shaven up to the neck only.' *Viśvarūpa* felt slighted and said . 'I am asking your way' (*mārgam pricchate mayā*), meaning, 'I want to know what spiritual path you follow,' to which *Śankara* replied 'What did my way tell you?' *Viśvarūpa* really lost his temper at this and shouted angrily 'The way said that your mother is a widow,' to which *Śankara* said with a *shrug* 'It might be true.' Thus he meant that the 'way' told *Viśvarūpa* that his (*Viśvarūpa's*) mother was a widow, to which *Śaṅkara* added that it might be true *Viśvarūpa* was beside himself with anger and asked *Śankara*, '*Surā Pītha*?' meaning, whether *Śaṅkara* was drunk *Śankara* twisted the question to mean 'Is the liquor yellow in colour?' and replied 'Liqour is whitish in colour ' *Viśvarūpa* countered 'I know the colour, but perhaps you know the taste, . ' At this *Viśvarūpa* went red with anger He hurled abuses at *Śankara* but they rebounded with added strength upon himself At this juncture the other guests who had come there to attend the *śrādha* ceremony intervened They calmed down *Viśvarūpa* and requested him to extend a courteous welcome to the young guest and invite him for *bhikṣā* Accordingly, *Viśvarūpa* invited *Śankara* for *bhikṣā*, but the *Ācārya* said that he had come there for a *Veda-bhikṣā*, meaning, a *bhikṣā* of discussions and arguments It was decided that they would meet the next day to start their discussions and arguments *Śankara*, after accepting the midday meal at *Viśvarūpa's* place, returned to the river bank where his disciples were awaiting him.

Discussions with *Viśvarūpa*

The next day, as scheduled, the disputations started, with the lady of the house *Ubhaya Bhāratī* as the moderator A condition was laid that the vanquished would give up his mode

of life, join the victor's camp and take up his mode of life *Ubhaya Bhāratī* was a learned and accomplished lady, second to none in her knowledge and wisdom She got her name by having become proficient in the *Śāstrā-s* while still a maiden living in her father's house, and also by attaining proficiency after marriage in her husband's house He original name was *Bhāratī*, the Illumined, but owing to her having become an illumined one both at her father's and her husband's place, she was named *Ubhaya Bhāratī* (*Ubhaya*=Both) Since she had to look after the household affairs also and serve the people *bhikṣā*, she could not make herself free to hear the disputations all through So, she took out two fresh garlands, put one of them around the neck of her husband, *Viśvarūpa*, and the other on *Śankara* She said that whichever garland faded, the wearer of that would be reckoned as having been vanquished. The arguments started in a cheerful and composed atmosphere, and went on for days on end. Day by day the crowd of listeners increased and they were wonder-struck at the stamina of each contestant and the inexhaustible store of arguments and counter-arguments, assertions and negations they drew upon to establish their respective stand-points

The arguments lasted for eighteen days *Viśvarūpa* could not withstand the onslaught of *Śaṅkara*'s arguments and logical expositions The garland put around *Viśvarūpa's* neck faded, while that on *Śankara*'s neck was still fresh *Ubhaya Bhāratī* declared that *Viśvarūpa* had been vanquished According to previous agreement, *Viśvarūpa* became *Śankara*'s disciple and was initiated into the holy order of *Sannyāsa*. He was given a new name, *Sureśvara*, and he became famous in later years as *Sureśvarācārya*

Ubhaya Bhāratī, however, did not concede full victory to *Śankara* She challenged him to fresh session of arguments with her, contending that since she was the wife of *Viśvarūpa* and was his partner in life in all respects, a complete victory of *Śankara* could be admitted only after she too was defeated The

Ācārya accepted the challenge and a fresh session of argumentation started *Śankara* again came out victorious, but was dumb founded on one subject—the art of love It was impossible for him to discuss this subject since he was a *Brahmacārī* But *Śankara* did not want to admit defeat He requested for a month's time to study and master the art

He started out with his disciples and they reached a forest As luck would have it, there they came upon a king lying dead under a tree The queens who had followed him in the hunting expedition had fainted and were lying unconscious around him *Śaṅkara* immediately told his disciples that he intended to enter the body of the king, and after acquiring knowledge of the art of love, leave that body and re-enter his own He asked them to take care of his body for a month while he would be away in the king's body He then entered a small cave nearby and sat in meditation, lifted his *prāṇā-s* and entered the king's body The king came alive and soon the queens also regained their consciousness, and together they went back to the palace

After a month, *Śankara* by his *Yogik* power left the king's body and entered his own. He then returned to *Ubhaya Bhāratī* to continue his argumentations She, however, did not enter into any further discussion, but conceded full victory to *Śankara*, acknowledging especially his *Yogik* feat of leaving one body and entering another It is believed that *Ubhaya Bhāratī* was an incarnation of *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of learning, and that she was born as a human being as the result of a curse When her husband, *Viśvarūpa*, gave up the householder's life and took to *sannyāsa*, she gave up her body and went back to her heavenly abode

Chapter III

DIG VIJAYAM

From his first victory onwards, till the *Ācārya* entered into *Mahāsamādhī*, it is a story of continuous tour, of meeting learned persons, religious leaders, kings and chieftains, understanding the problems of the people and remedying the situations. This phase of his life is known as *dig-vijayam*, meaning, conquest of the various quarters Master of the scriptures, a lion among the scholars, an extraordinary ascetic who had mastered all systems of *Yoga* and brought them into practice whenever the situation demanded, *Śankara* trod the length and breadth of the country, eradicating all false values and philosophical systems He had a heart overflowing with the love of God and all His creatures Though he himself was firmly established in the condition of non-duality, he never bloated himself up with empty pride

As a true *Vedāntin*, he lived the simple life of a devotee of the Lord. Thus, whenever he passed through a sacred place, he would invariably make it a point to visit the important temples there and even compose hymns in praise of the presiding deities He would offer advice to the persons managing the affairs of the temple regarding the routines of worship and other disciplines to be observed, as well as reforms in administration Thus, there is hardly a temple worth its name in the country which has no legend of a visit by *Ādī Śankara* attached to its history, the reforms that he brought about, or the hymns that he composed to its deity during his visit Crowds of devotees and admirers

thronged to him, often to enlighten and educate themselves, but more often to overcome their personal difficulties, such as to get cured of chronic diseases or redress of some grief. *Śaṅkara* entertained them all At no time was his *darśana* and counsel denied to anyone, whether he be a great *pandita* or a layman.

Attempt on *Śaṅkara*'s life

After gaining his second distinguished disciple, *Sureśvara*, *Śankara* started on a tour of the southern kingdoms He passed through *Nāśik-Pañchavatī* of *Rāmāyana* fame, *Paṇdarīpura* (the present *Paṇdharpur*), and reached *Śrīsailam* Around *Śrīsailam* in those days used to live a very powerful tribe called the *Kāpālikā-s* who practised human sacrifice. One day, one of their leaders, by name *Urga Bhairava*, met *Śankara* in solitude and prayed that his head be given as sacrifice to their primitive God so that he would be assured of prosperity *Śankara*, the compassionate, consented That night, when the *Ācārya*'s head was about to be cut off by the *Kāpālika*, *Padmapāda* and other disciples reached the spot and beheaded *Ugra Bhairava* himself. This story is elaborated in the essay on *Padmapāda* in Chapter 4

Gokarṇa, Mūkāmbikā and *Śriṅgerī*

From *Śrīsailam Śankara* and his disciples went to *Gokarna* on the western seashore There was a famous temple there dedicated to Lord *Śiva* in the form of *Śrī Gokarneśvara Śankara* went to the temple and worshipped the Lord and composed a beautiful hymn The place was a stronghold of *Śaivites* and one *Nīlakantha* was their *Guru* They argued with *Śaṅkara* regarding the supremacy of *Śaivism* over all other sects, but he convinced them of the superiority of *Advaita Vedānta*, and they became his devout followers From *Gokarna*, the *Ācārya* passed through *Hariharapurā* and reached *Mūkāmbikā* There he saw a bereaved couple grieving over the dead body of their son The *Ācārya* prayed at the temple of

goddess *Mūkāmbikā* for the redress of their grief, and the boy came to life. From *Mūkāmbikā, Śankara* came to a village, *Śrīvelī* There the *Ācārya* gained his third disciple, *Hastāmalaka* The story of *Hastāmalaka*'s meeting with *Śankara* is given in Chapter 4 *Śaṅkara* then proceeded to *Śringerī*, the hallowed place not far from *Śrīvelī*. He remembered having rested at that place about ten years earlier, while he was on his way to meet his *guru*. He recognised the old tree and the rocks, and the episode of the frogs and the snake. He narrated the story to his disciples They were very happy to hear the story and immediately conferred among themselves and decided to establish an *āśrama* there.

Hearing that *Ācārya Śaṅkara* had come and was camping at *Śriṅgerī*, King *Ādityavarmā*, in whose kingdom the place was, ordered that all facilities be made available to the *Ācārya* and his disciples. They all stayed in that place for many months, the longest stay they had at one place after *Badrikāśrama*. A number of wealthy devotees came to meet *Śankara*, among them king *Sudhanva* who ruled over *Ujjainī* which was a dominion under King *Adityavarmā Padmapāda* and his colleagues discussed with the other devotees their plan of setting up a *maṭha* on a large scale at *Śringerī*. But *Śankara* cautioned them not to get involved in such elaborate programmes He advised that a small temple for *Śāradā Devī*, the compassionate goddess of learning, and a few hutments for *sannyāsin-s* to stay nearby would be sufficient

Soon construction of the temple began with the assistance of the well-to-do devotees, and some shelters were made for others. An image of the goddess was installed over a *Śrī Chakra* inscribed on a stone by the *Ācārya*, and the *brāhmanā*-s conducted the necessary *pūjā-s Śankara* also peformed *pūjā* in his own way and composed a hymn in praise of *Śāradā Devī* He then advised his disciples that though the aim of their pursuit was to reach the state of attributeless *Brahman*, none of them could afford to overlook spiritual practices, such as *upāsanā* He said that at the physical level the relationship between the

devā-s and the *jīvā-s* was like that of a king and his subjects. As long as the body existed, *deva-pūjā* should also be carried out. By the practice of *upāsanā*, the mind will be purified Therefore, side by side with the study of the scriptures and reflection on their contents, *upāsanā* should also be continued By worshipping *Śāradā Devī*, the abode of all knowledge, true knowledge would dawn With the dawn of true knowledge only could one overcome ignorance Therefore, *upāsanā* of *Śāradā Devī* was essential even for those who had taken to the holy order of *sannyāsa*.

After the establishment of the temple, as the centre of learning, the *Ācārya* stayed there for some more months, teaching the disciples and expounding the Truths contained in the scriptures. During this time a number of works were composed by the *Ācārya* to aid in the teaching of *Vedānta* to the students They include *Vivekacūdāmani, Aparokṣānubhūti, Ātmabodha, Sarva-Vedānta-sāra-saṁgraha*, etc.

While at *Śriṅgerī*, a young *brāhmana* boy used to serve the *Ācārya* by attending to his personal needs This boy became, ere long, the fourth distinguished disciple of the *Ācārya*, and was named *Toṭaka* The story of *Toṭakācārya* is told in Chapter 4.

Trip to *Kālaḍi*

While thus they sojourned in *Śriṅgerī*, one day the *Ācārya* suddenly came to know of his mother's illness at the village home in *Kālaḍi*, and her impending death Remembering his promise to his mother that he would present himself at her bedside at the time of her death, *Śankara* decided to hurry to her side He called his disciples and told them to come down to *Kālaḍi* He then travelled through air by his *Yogik* powers and reached his mother's side quickly

The mother was extremely happy to see her son again after a lapse of about twelve years Tears rolled down her old

emaciated cheeks *Śankara* comforted her He then sang a hymn in praise of *Śiva*. At this the attendents of *Śiva* appeared on the scene and *Śankara* requested them to escort his mother to the world of the Lord. But the mother was terrified at the sight of the *Śiva-dūtā-s* and she prayed to her son to withhold them *Śaṅkara* then remembered that his mother was an ardent devotee of *Kṛṣṇa*. He, therefore, sang a hymn in praise of Lord *Viṣṇu*. Immediately, the attendants of *Viṣṇu* in their beautiful attire, glistening crowns and necklances and fresh fragrant flower-garlands appeared on the spot and gracefully took away the holy mother's soul to their abode of eternal happiness (*Vaikuntha*) These two hymns which *Śaṅkara* sang are said to be the famous *Śiva Bhujaṅgam* and *Viṣṇu Bhujangam*

Śankara then started preparations for the cremation of the mortal remains of his mother. He changed his ochre clothes and put on white instead. He requested his relatives to help him carry the body and place it on the funeral pyre. But the orthodox people would not cooperate with him because they said that a *sannyāsī* that he was, he had no right to enter his house again, much less to perform the funeral rites of his mother. Stunned by the cruel attitude of the relatives, *Śaṅkara* went into the compound, cut down a few plantain trees standing there and made up a funeral pyre He cut the dead body of his mother into four or five pieces, carried them one by one to the pyre and assembled the body there Then he took a little water from the *kamanḍalu*, and after chanting some *mantrā-s* threw it on the pyre. The pyre caught fire immediately, and within a short time the body was completely burned and reduced to ashes The relatives who witnessed the miraculous feat approached *Śankara* and begged his forgiveness

Visit of an Old Friend

King *Rājaśekhara* of Kerala came to know of the *Ācārya*'s visit to *Kāladi* and immediately came to see him They talked for a long time and, incidentally, the *Ācārya* asked the king

whether he had composed further books The king said that the three books composed by him earlier, and which were read out to the *Ācārya*, were all destroyed in a fire, and that after the incident he did not feel like taking up the pen again. *Śankara* consoled the king, saying that he could dictate from memory all the three books, and asked him to take them all down The king was surprised beyond measure, and took down the contents of the books as dictated by *Śaṅkara*.

Within a few days, the disciples arrived from *Śringerī*, *Padmapāda* who had gone on a pilgrimage of *Rāmeśvaram* and met with some unpleasant experiences on the way also came back and joined the *Ācārya* at *Kāladi*. The details of *Padmapāda's* pilgrimage are narrated in the essay on *Padmapāda* in Chapter 4. All of them then set forth on further tours of conquest

Ācārya on the Move

It was a magnificent sight to see the *Ācārya* on the move. Apart from his four distinguished disciples, he had a number of other equally dedicated and learned devotees and admirers in the entourage A number of persons who desired to go on pilgrimage joined the crowd since it was safer for them to travel together, for then they did not have to fear dacoits and wild animals Apart from that, the company of the *Ācārya* and the learned persons accompanying him made the trip enlightening and educative

The group consisted of *Padmapāda*, *Sureśvara*, *Hastāmalaka* and *Toṭaka*, as well as other learned disciples such as *Samitpāṇī*, *Cidvilāsa Jñānakānda*, *Viṣnugupta*, *Śuddha Kīrti*, *Bhānu Marīca*, *Krṣna Darśana*, *Buddha Virīcī*, *Pāda Suddhānta*, *Ānandagirī* and others as also king *Śudhanvā* of Ujjain who had left his kingdom temporarily to join the *Ācārya*'s tour, household disciples, *Vānaprasthā-s*, and an army of servants.

They would move in two or three groups, an advance group going ahead blowing conches and tinkling bells, declaring the arrival of the *Ācārya*. The local chieftains, kings or rich merchants would come out to receive the party at the outskirts of their village or town and make all arrangements for acommodation and food for the big group. The *Ācārya* would speak to the people gathered to listen to him, and exhort them to follow the true path of worship and contemplation. He would visit temples, discuss the methods of worship, and suggest improvements wherever required. He would invite persons to put forth their doubts, and would answer them all. Thus, even those who were indifferent to religion and spiritual life got interested in the topic in the electrifying presence of the Master.

The journeys in those days were rough and tough. Often large stretches of jungles and dry terrain, uninhabited by human beings, had to be crossed The thoughtful hosts provided the group enough transport facilities like bullock-carts and horses. They ensured regular supply of food, and provided milching cows Apart from carrying men, transport facilities were required for carrying the vast amount of reference books and manuscripts of books composed by the *Ācārya* and the disciples as well as writing materials and other items of tent life Kings and chieftains donated horses and elephants along with attendants and servants to the *Ācārya* for his journey Camels were also added to the group when they crossed over the great Indian desert near the Sind Thus the group became self-sufficient and fortified to meet all circumstances.

The remnant of this tradition is seen even today, with animal of each variety described above following the *Śaṅkarācāryā*-s who travel on foot throughout the country, though the paraphernalia has lost much of its necessity and significance in modern times with mechanical transport and communication facilities available quite easily

The group thus moved from village to village, covering all important towns, temples and cultural centres of the country

Thus, they traversed kingdom after kingdom throughout the sub-continent The *Ācārya* conceived India as one cultural unit from the *Himālayās* to *Kanyākumārī* and from *Kāmarūpa* to *Gandhāra* (i e , from Assam to Afghanistan). With his lofty vision of the cultural unity of *Bhārat*, and the supreme realisation of the one underlying God-principle pervading all the animate and inanimate world of beings and things, he could infuse into the people the idea of their essential oneness, in spite of the seemingly different customs, traditions and methods of worship Thus it was truly a *dig-vijaya yātrā*, a triumphant tour of conquest, annihilating the forces of ignorance and disruption, of consolidation and establishment of the unifying forces of the universal brotherhood and mutual understanding, culminating in the goal of all pursuits, the intimate experience of the non-dual Reality, no matter what paths were followed

The Tours

In the South:

From *Kāladi*, the *Ācārya* and his group moved southwards to *Rāmeśvaram* After worshipping at the sacred temple o *Rāmeśvaram*, they reached *Śrīrangam*, and from there moved to *Kāñcīpuram*

During his travels in these areas, *Śankara* came across a number of sects who were engaged in the exclusive worship of deities like *Śiva, Bhavānī, Mahālaksmī, Sarasvatī, Jagat Dhātri* and such like *Śankara* pointed out to their leaders the deficiencies in their narrow systems of worship and philosophy and educated them in loftier visions in their respective systems He formulated for their benefit the *Pañcayatana* worship, i e., worship of the five main godheads, namely *Viṣnu, Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya* and *Ganeśa* At *Śrīrangam*, the stronghold of the *Vaisnavites*, the sect was sub-divided into six groups, namely, *Bhaktā-s, Bhagavatā-s, Vaisnavā-s, Pañcarātrā-s, Vaikhānasā-s* and *Karmahīnā-s*, each indulging in pursuit of its own narrow

vision The *Ācārya* reformed them all and educated them in the higher vision of unity.

After staying for a month at *Śrīrangam*, the *Ācārya* and his group started for *Kāñcīpuram* via *Subrahmanya Deśam* and *Śubhāganāvarapuram*. At the latter place, there was a huge temple dedicated to *Ganeśa*, but the devotees were divided into groups who worshipped different *Ganeśā-s* such as *Mahā Gaṇapati, Havidra Ganapati, Uchchiṣta Ganapati, Navanīta Ganapati* and *Svarna Ganapati*. The *Ācārya* pointed out to them their foolishness in adhering to one or the other form of the godhead and blinding themselves to the higher vision of Truth Moving from there, after a few days he reached *Kāñcīpuram*

Kāñcīpuram—This city was the capital of the reigning *Pallavā* kings The *Ācārya* was disappointed to see that the two temples of *Kāñcīpuram*, dedicated to *Viṣnu* and *Śiva*, were lying in neglect He requested the king to do the needful to improve the conditions there The *Ācārya* observed that *Tāntrik-s* played an important role in those days at *Kāñcī* Their methods of worship had degenerated very much and he wanted to reform them He installed a *Tāntrik Yantra* of Goddess *Kāmāksī* and directed the king to build a temple for the goddess over it. *Śankara* also renovated the temples of *Viṣnu-Kāñcī* and *Śiva-Kāñcī*, and established rules of worship there The people were surprised to see that the *Ācārya* was not a dry man of intellect only, but was adept in all forms of spiritual pursuits. They overcame their ignorance regarding the true import of *Advaita* as preached by *Śankara* and became his followers.

To the North :

From *Kāñcī* the *Ācārya* went to *Venkatācalam* (modern *Tirupati*), and from there to *Karnātakā* and *Vidardha* At *Vidarbha* he had to encounter the *Kāpālikā-s* once again When they were defeated in arguments they took to arms to oppose the *Ācārya*, but king *Sudhanva's* soldiers kept them back the leader

of the *Kāpālika* cult, *Krākacā* by name, then sought to intimidate the *Ācārya* He took a skull in his hand, closed his eyes and started meditating on his favourite god, *Bhairava*. In a short time the empty skull was filled with liquor. He drank half of it and kept it away He then continued his meditation and within moments a fearful form appeared on the scene, adorned by a garland of skulls and long tresses of reddish hair *Krākacā* requested the weird being to kill the *Ācārya* But *Bhairava* turned on the *Kāpālika* instead, saying, 'How dare you ask me to kill *Śankara* who is my own Self?', and killed the sinful *Krākacā* himself with a blow *Bhairava* then requested *Śankara* to reform the methods of the *Kāpālikā-s* and educate them on the nobler ways of worship and life. Accordingly, the *Ācārya* stayed there for some weeks and reformed their primitive life and culture

Śankara had not forgotten the invitation extended to him, while camping at *Kāñcī*, by the scholars of *Āndhrā* to visit their country, and he now desired to fulfil that commitment. He started for *Rajāmahendry* On the way, the *Ācārya* was met by the leader of a sub-sect of the *Kāpālikā-s* who started enumerating the good qualities of their sect and the great freedom enjoyed by them He said that there was no restriction among them to do anything they could eat and drink anything When the *Ācārya* asked what he himself did, the leader said that his father was engaged in making liquor and his mother was a prostitute. He himself was engaged in selling liquor and had a number of concubines Further, he was in constant touch with the various gods who would appear before him at his mere wish *Śankara* simply told the drunkard to go away

In course of time they reached *Rajāmahendry* and after staying there for a few days left for the kingdom of *Kālingā* and the famous temple of *Jagannātha Purī* While at *Purī*, the *Ācārya* recovered the idol of Lord *Jagannātha* which had been immerse in the *Cilkā* lake for fear of destruction by other religionists. The image was duly reinstalled and worship according to the *Vedik* tradition was re-established From

Kālingā, the *Ācārya* reached *Daksina Kosala* (the southern path of the extensive *Magadha* kingdom) He met the leaders of sects who worshipped *Kubera,* the god of wealth, and *Indra,* the king of gods, and reformed their habits and thought And then, encountering a sect which believed only in worship of *Yama,* the Lord of death, as the supreme Truth, he reformed them also.

Prayāga—Travelling on, the *Ācārya* and his group reached *Prayāga* There he came across a *śūnyavādī*, a person belonging to the sect which believed that the ultimate Truth was just a hollow void, a big zero He greeted the *Ācārya* and said sarcastically. 'While I was coming to meet you, I witnessed a wonderful sight I saw the son born to a barren woman, who took bath in the waters of the mirage and made a garland of flowers which grew in the sky He was walking away, taking this garland in one hand and a bow made of the horns of a rabbit in the other. I thought he was a god, and after prostrating to him came to see you ' *Śankara* talked to the intelligent sceptic and convinced him of the existence of the great Reality People belonging to the sects who worshipped God in His incarnation as *Varāhā, Manu-loka upāsakā-s, Gunavādī-s, Sāmkhyā-s, Paramānukarana-vadī-s,* etc , confronted the *Ācārya,* only to be defeated and reformed by him

Kāśī—From *Prayāga,* the *Ācārya* and his disciples came to *Kāśī* Twelve years ago, he had set out from *Kāśī* at the command of the Lord to revive *Sanātana Dharma* He was now back there, and was thrilled to worship Lord *Viśvanātha* The mission entrusted to him was progressing well with his blessings, and the *Ācārya* had accomplished quite a lot He stayed at *Kāśī* for three months

Bhaja Govindam—During his stay at *Kāśī,* one day, while the *Ācārya* was walking through the streets with his disciples, he came across an old man labouring hard at learning the rules of *Samskrta* grammar The *Ācārya* was overcome with pity for him who was wasting the last days of his life in futile intellectual

pursuits without caring to know the import of the scriptures and living up to its teachings The *Ācārya* then burst forth into a poetic song, exhorting the foolish man to *'Seek Govind' (Bhaja Govindam)* instead of toiling to master the rules of grammar which would not be of any use to him at the time of death

In the poem, sweetly rhythmic and vibrantly philosophical, the *Ācārya* paints eloquently the picture of the futile life of those engaged in mere sense-gratifications, diagnoses the cause of all human unhappiness, and points out a path for coming out of their vainglorious pursuits and discovering the true beauty and fulfilment of life. This poem is, therefore, also called *Moha Mudgara,* a way to come out of delusion. It is said that after singing twelve verses in a poetic outburst, the *Ācārya* broke his eloquence for a while, and the disciples one by one added one verse each in the same rhyme, making a total of fourteen verses The *Ācārya* then sang another five verses and wound up the 'garland of advice' with a benediction that 'may you become liberated from *samsāra* soon and perceive the Truth enshrined in your own heart ' Thus, though the poem was eked out of the master's heart at the sight of an old man labouring in vain to master the rules of grammer, it turned out to be a philosophical song addressed to mankind as a whole.

To the West

While at *Kāśī*, *Śankara* was invited by the people of *Saurāstra* to visit their land Accepting their invitation, the *Ācārya* set forth to that place with his group of disciples The way to *Saurāstra* lay across the kingdom of *Avantī* and its capital city, *Ujjaini* They halted for a while at *Ujjaini*, and received the hospitality of the king and prominent *paṇḍita-s* there They worshipped at the famous *Śiva* shrine known as the *Mahā-Kāla* temple and spread the tenets of *Advaita*.

From *Ujjaini* they went to *Girnāra*, *Somanātha*, and *Prabhāsa Tīrtha* where Lord *Krsna* had given up his body

Journeying further, they reached *Dvārakā*, the city of Lord *Kṛṣna*, and were thrilled to worship at the temple there. From *Dvārakā* they travelled eastwards and crossed the kingdom of *Kankanā* and *Gurjara Deśa* After passing through *Śrīmalā*, the capital of *Gurjara*, they came to *Puṣkara* (near present Ajmer) and crossing the great Indian desert, reached *Sindhu Sanghama*, the place where the river *Sindhu* (Indus) joins the sea Moving up the river, they crossed many towns and reached *Purusapura* in the Kingdom of *Gandhāra* (modern *Peśāvara*) While sojourning at *Puruṣapura*, the *Ācārya* received an invitation to visit the north-western countries of *Bāhlika* and *Kāmboja* Buddhism was very popular in those regions, and yet, no leader of Buddhism came forward for disputations with *Śankara* He spread the *Advaita* philosophy there without any opposition Moving on, they crossed over to the kingdom of *Kaśmīra* (present Kashmir)

The *Sarvajña Pītha*—While resting there for a few days, the *pandita-s* of *Kaśmīra* came in a big representation to the *Ācārya* and said that unless he defeated the learned persons of the *Śāradā Pītha* there, they would not accept the supremacy of his philosophy The *Śāradā Pītha* was renowned as the *Sarvajña Pītha*, the seat of the highest learning The custom there was to place the most learned man on this seat and crown him as the *Sarvajña* i.e., he who is well versed in all branches of knowledge, both sacred and secular *Padmapāda* and other disciples requested the Master to accept the challenge The *Ācārya* consented and reached the *Śāradā* temple It had four gates The *Ācārya* wished to enter the temple through the southern gate with his disciples, but he was stopped reverentially by a group of *paṇdita-s* who challenged him to discussion on *Nyāya* and *Vaiśesikā* systems of philosophy He answered their questions and they allowed him to enter the second assembly of *pandita-s* well versed in *Sāmkhya* and the *Patañjalī Yoga* *Śankara* answered their questions and satisfied them, and then entered the third assembly consisting of Jains and Buddhists He vanquished them in arguments and entered the fourth and last

assembly of *puṇḍita-s* made up of the followers of *Pūrva Mīmāmsā* Again, the *Ācārya* had no difficulty in defeating them in arguments He then walked straight to the decorated 'throne of knowledge' amdist cheers of victory. He held the hand of *Padmapāda* who was on his left and that of *Sureśvara* who was on his right, and followed by *Toṭaka* and *Hastāmalaka* immediately behind him, ascended the *Sarvajña Pītha*

Śankara then worshipped Goddess *Śāradā* at the temple with his disciples He stayed in the premises of the temple for a few days at the invitation of the learned *paṇḍita-s* and held discourses on the various branches of philosophy While at *Kaśmīra*, the *Ācārya* is believed to have composed the book *Anātma-śrī-vigarhanam* to bring the disciples back to their sense which they seemed to have lost, seeing the beauty of nature, they seemed to have lost sight of the boundless beauty of their own inner Self

The king of *Kaśmīra* made necessary arrangements for the stay of the *Ācārya* and his disciples when they reached the capital city, *Śrīnagar*, but *Śankara* preferred to stay near an ancient *Śiva* temple on the top of a hill overlooking the city This hill came to be known as *Śankarācārya* Hill in later years, and is still known by that name Near *Śrīnagar* there was a temple dedicated to *Bhavānī*, the consort of Lord *Śiva* *Śaṅkara* is said to have worshipped the goddess here and composed the beautiful hymn *Saundarya Laharī* while staying in the temple believed to be the present *Ksīra Bhavānī* temple.

After a few days the *Ācārya* left *Kaśmīra* and came down to the plains via *Taksaśilā* The place had derived its name from king *Taksa*, son of *Bhārata*, brother of *Śrī Rāma* The *Ācārya* reformed the people of the place who had embraced Buddhism, but who had deteriorated in their customs and traditions by the practice of low *Tāntrik* worship.

From *Taksaśilā*, the *Ācārya* travelled eastwards and passed through *Jvālāmukhī*, *Haridvāra*, *Naimiśāranya*, *Ayodhyā*, *Pātaliputra*, *Nālandā* and *Gayā* After *Gayā*, they

visited the kingdoms of *Vanga* and *Prāk-Jyotiśa* (present Assam) The King of *Prāk-Jyotiśa* welcomed the *Ācārya*, and his disciples, and together they reached the town of *Kāmarūpa* famous for the temple of *Kāmakhya*. The *Śāktā-s* were powerful in this place, and they entered into disputation with *Śankara* about the supremacy of their cult When they were beaten hollow in their arguments, one of their leaders, *Abhinava Gupta*, cast an evil spell on the *Ācārya*, on account of which he was attacked by the dreadful disease of dysentery The *Ācārya*'s health deteriorated day by day, causing concern to everybody *Padmapāda*, who was a shrewd observer by invoking his favourite diety Lord *Narasimhā* cast a spell on *Abhinava Gupta* The disease that had been tormenting *Śankara* now subsided completely, but appeared in the person of *Abhinava Gupta* Unable to remedy his evil action, he died of the disease. The news of the death of this evil character and the circumstances which brought it about spread like wildfire and followers of the cult became repentant of their methods of worship They took refuge under *Śankara* and were reformed by him The *Ācārya* composed a book, *Prapañca Sāram*, for the benefit of the *Tāntrik* followers for nobler understanding and performance of *Tāntrik* rites

The *Ācārya* and disciples now started westwards, and in course of time reached the banks of the *Gangā*

Visit of *Guru Gauḍapāda*—One evening, after ablutions, when the *Ācārya* was sitting in a meditative mood on the banks of the *Gangā*, a *sannyāsin* of uncommon brilliance appeared before him The *Ācārya* was pleasantly surprised at the arrival of the divine guest and through his *Yogik* eye recognised him to be *Gauḍapāda*, the *guru* of his *guru* *Śankara* and his disciples prostrated at the feet of the supreme *guru* *Gaudapāda* had come there to congratulate *Śankara* on the successful accomplishment of his mission After blessing *Śankara* and the disciples, *Gaudapāda* vanished The *Ācārya* was immersed in deep *samādhī* for a long time

Paśupatinātha—After a couple of days, a few people from *Paśupatinātha* (capital of modern Nepal) came to the *Ācārya* and reported to him the pitiable state of affairs at the *Paśupatinātha* temple and the misdeeds of misguided Buddhists He rushed to *Paśupatinātha*, renovated the temple and reformed the system of worship *Śankara* instructed the king on the disciplines to be followed in the worship there The king named the son born to him at a later date as '*Śankara Deva*' in loving memory of the *Ācārya*

Back to Badarikāśrama---From *Paśupatinātha* the *Ācārya* and his disciples reached *Badarikāśrama* He was pleased to see that regular worship at the temple, on the lines suggested by him earlier, had been established He stayed in the premises of the temple, worshipped the Lord, and composed the hymn *Hari Mīdhe*

Towards the End : *Mahāsamādhī*

From *Badarikāśrama*, the *Ācārya*, with a few disciples, went to *Kedāranātha*. The time for his departure from the mortal world had drawn near he was thirty-two by then *Śaṅkara*, therefore, wished to give up his body at the sacred place of *Kedāranātha*. The disciples were very unhappy The *Ācārya* asked them to voice any doubts they might have had and get them clarified, but they could not utter anything. At last, *Padmapāda* requested the *Ācārya* to tell them what they were supposed to do King *Sudhanva*, who was with them, requested the *Ācārya* that he should entrust four of his most distinguished disciples with the work of establishing four *mathā-s* in the four parts of the country and pass down the eternal wisdom of the scriptures through the *guru-śiṣya paramparā* (the lineage of teacher-disciples) for the generations to come. He requested the *Ācārya* to give instructions in this regard so that the wisdom of the *Rsī-s* would not be lost to future generations

The *Ācārya* thought for a while and said 'Let *Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Hastāmalaka* and *Totaka* establish four

Mathā-s at the four corners of the country *Jagannātha Pur* *Śringerī*, *Dvārakā* and *Jyotirdhāma* should become the *math* centres, let *Kālikā Matha* be established at *Dvārakā*, *Govardha* *Matha* at *Jagannātha Purī*, *Śāradā Matha* at *Śringerī* and *Jyoti* *Matha* at *Jyotirdhāma*' He then dictated a book *Mahānuśasanam*, setting out the rules and disciplines to b followed in the administration and working of the *Mathā-s* King *Sudhanva* took down the dictation himself

Having done this, they all set their eyes on the beaming face of the beloved *Ācārya* and sat silently After a long pause, King *Sudhanva* broke the silence and requested *Śankara* to advise them on the essence of all *Vedāntik* teaching, and the particula points for special contemplation The *Ācārya* then gave out the ten verses (*Daśa Śloki*) which he had earlier chanted in the presence of his *guru* at their first meeting, and said that by contemplating on the meaning of these verses one would find that the essence of all *Vedāntik* teaching was compressed into them They all listened to the chant of the verses by the Master deep with the conviction of Self-experience They felt elevated and were soon deeply immersed in a mood of meditation The Master also went into a deep *samādhī*, and through his *Yogik* power dissolved his human body into the five elements and disappeared from the vision of the mortal world He merged back into his own supreme state of perfect Bliss

With the disappearance of the Master, the disciples chanted the *Pranava Mantra* loudly which enchoed and re-echoed in the *Himālayan* valleys They stayed in a state of extreme renunciation for a number of days Gradually, King *Sudhanva* reminded them of their task of establishing the *mathā-s* They came down to the plains to fulfil the work, so lovingly entrusted to them by their incomparable Master

Personality of *Śankara*

Śankara's life and teachings portray a perfect man, highly competent and supremely efficient To sum up, a brief profile of

the Master may be drawn thus Śankara, the *Yogeśvara* was the most distinguished in all systems of *Yoga*

* Foremost in the field of *Jñāna Yoga*, the Perfect *Jñānī*
* Foremost in the field of *Karma Yoga*, the ideal of all *Karma Yogī-s*
* Foremost in the field of *Bhakti Yoga*, the noblest of *Bhaktā-s* worthy of emulation
* Unsurpassed in the field of *Haṭha Yoga*
* Master in both the knowledge and practice of the *Tāntrik* system.
* Foremost among Teachers, a 'mobile university,' sympathetic yet relentless, the world teacher, *Jagadguru*
* A Perfect Organiser who established great institutions in the four quarters of the country which remain, even today, the beacons of spirituality.
* A far-sighted stateman who integrated the country as a cultural unit and laid firm foundation for it

  Even today, India is bound as one nation not by one political ideology, or one common economic policy or any other secular programme of material welfare, but by its one cultural foundation which has sprung up from, is sustained by, its spiritual heritage This great heritage was in turn consolidated in its best and purest form by *Śankara*
* An examplary Man of Letters, his style has the mathematical precision of a scientists, vividity of expression of a poet laureate and unity of vision of a spiritual Master, coupled with simplicity and straightforwardness of presentation
* Above all, a down-to-earth man whose heart throbbed with compassion and sympathy for all men and

beings irrespective of whether they were rich or poor, learned or illiterate, *brāhmana* or *cāndāla*

Śaṅkara Vijyam-s

(BIOGRAPHIES OF *ŚANKARA*)

There does not appear to be any comprehensive historical biography of *Śankara*, and the material available about him is a mixture of facts, tradition and legends Some details on the life and teachings of *Śankara Bhagavadpāda* have come down to us through *Śankara Vijayam-s*, of which some are

* The *Brhad Śaṅkara Vijaya* of *Citusukhācārya* who is said to be the direct disciple of *Śankara* himself
* The *Prācīna Śankara Vijaya* of *Ānandagiri* who is believed to have been known also as *Totakācārya* of *Jyotir Mutha* at *Badrikāśrama*
* The *Ācāryacarita*, also known as *Keralīya Śankara Vijaya* of *Govindanatha* of Kerala
* The *Śankarābhyudaya* of *Rājā Cūdāmani Dīksita*
* The *Guru Vijaya*, also called the *Ācārya Vijaya*, of *Ananta Ānanda Giri*
* The *Ācārya Dig Vijaya* of *Vallisahāyakavi*
* The *Śankara Dig Vijaya Sāra* of *Sadānanda*
* The *Śankara Vijaya Vilāsa* of *Cidvilāsa*
* The *Srīmad Śankara Dig Vijayam* of *Madhava* (*Śrī Svāmī Vidyāranya* of *Śringerī Mutt*, 14th Century A D) It is also said to be known as *Sanksepa Śankara Vijayam*

Chapter IV

WORKS OF *ŚAṄKARA*

Śankara's compositions can be broadly divided into three sections

a *Bhāṣyā-s* (commentaries),

b *Prakriyā* (or *Prakarana*) *Granthā-s*, (Books dealing with the fundamental concepts of *Vedānta*), and

c *Stotrā-s* (hymns and meditation verses)

Bhāṣyā-s

These are commentaries on the *Upaniṣad-s*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* These three canonical works form the corner-stones on which the edifice of *Hindūism* stands They are together called the *Prasthāna-trayī*, or the three great institutions *Śankara*'s *Bhāṣyā-s* or commentaries serve as a guide, a golden key, unlocking for us the vast treasure chambers of wisdom contained in our scirptures The language of the *Upaniṣad-s* is mystic in style and cannot be understood by literally translating them or by referring to dictionary The theme of the *Upanisad-s* is the One great Reality, the Supreme Truth, the Infinite, which cannot be expressed in terms of language in a direct manner The Truth is not perceived by mind as an object, nor is it a conclusion arrived at through the intellectual processess of reasoning If it were so, language could be an appropriate vehicle for expressing the idea But, Truth is experienced by the *Rsī-s* as a great revelation Out of eagerness

to give expression to the experiences of 'Truth-vision' gained by them in their meditations, when the *Ṛsī-s* employ the only vehicle of communication available with them, namely, language, it undergoes a tremendous change both in its style and import Thus it becomes the mystic language, the language of the *Upaniṣad-s* The ideas contained in such language do not become clear to a layman or a student by just translating the verses (words) into plain language with the use of the dictionary or by their apparent meaning To illustrate the point, let us take some typical examples

1. *Pūrṇam-adaḥ pūrnam-idam, pūrnāt pūrṇam udacyate*
pūrṇasya pūrnam-ādāya, pūrṇam eva-avaśiṣyate
(Śānti Mantra in Bṛhad , Īśa, Nārāyaṇa Up. etc.)

The translation of this *mantra* would read

i. *'That is whole, this is whole;*
ii. *from the whole, the whole becomes manifest.*
iii. *From the whole when the whole is taken out,*
vi. *what remains is thre whole.'*

2. *Anejad-ekaṁ manaso javīyo*
nainad-devā āpnuvavan-pūrvam-arsat,
tad-dhāvato-'nnyanat-tyeti tiṣṭhat-
tasmin-napo mātariśvā dadhāti. *(Īśāvāsya. IV)*

The translation would be

'The Self is motionless. It is swifter than the mind The Devā-s *could not overtake it. It ran ahead of them. Sitting, it goes faster than those who run after It. By It,* Mātariśvān *(wind) supports the activity of all living beings.'*

(3) *Nāham manye suvedeti no na vedeti veda ca*
yo nastad-veda tad-veda no na vedeti veda ca
(Kena II-2)

The translation would read

'I do not think that' "I know it well," But not that I do not know; I know, too. Who amongst us comprehends that, knows; he who thinks "I know not," he too understands.

There are some of the typical styles of the *Upanisad Rsī-s* It, therefore, requires explanations and a great deal of commentary to bring home the ideas of the scriptures into the intellectal appreciation of the students. The explanations, in order to be effective and truthful, must spring forth from the depths of one's own intimate experience of the Truth, in consonance with the *Rsi's* experience Thus *Śankara's bhāṣyā-s* are not to be viewed as mere intellectual works

Śankara wrote *bhāṣyā-s* on twelve* *Upaniṣad-s*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* He also composed commentaries on *Sanat Sujātīyam, Viṣnu Sahasranāma*, etc A list of such commentaries is given in the Appendix

Prakriyā Granthā-s.

No scientific book can be taught or studied without understanding the exact meaning of the various technical terms and phrases used in it Scriptures deal with the Science of the Self The proper study of scriptures like the *Upaniṣad-s* and the *Gītā*, therefore, require a thorough knowledge of the fundamental concepts of *Vedānta* Hence *Ācārya Śankara*, in the maturity of his wisdom, took up his pen to compose the *Prakriyā Granthā-s* (also called *Prakarana*) which explain the fundamentals of *Vedānta Vivekacūdāmaṇi, Ātma-bodha, Tattva-bodha*, etc , are some of the *Prakarana Granthā-s* composed by the Master A list of such books is given in the Appendix
CHAPTER X PAGE: 125

---

* Some ascribe commentary on *Śvetāśvatara Up* to *Śankara*, while others do not accept that Ed

Stotrā-s

The Master par excellence that *Śankara* was, he did not stop at culturing the intellect of his students, but carefully developed their hearts as well through the vast amount of devotional literature which streamed out of his bosom. It would not be correct to say that he 'composed' the hymns, for they seem to have flowed out of his heart in a perennial stream of love, devotion and supreme knowledge To *Śankara* prayer was no beggary His hymns invariably consist of the prayer to grant one the *true light of knowledge* and *discrimination* and to save one from the *wheel of birth and death*—thus setting forth an ideal to be pursued by the students. He was not an exclusive *Śaivite* or *Vaiṣnaviṭe* or *Śāktā*, and yet when he praised *Śiva*, *Viṣṇu* or *Durgā* in his hymns, he stood out to be the best among *Śaivītes, Vaiṣnavites* and *Śāktā-s*, thus setting a model for the respective groups for the correct method of worship Though he was established far above all groupism, his magnanimous mind, laden with compassion for the ordinary folk, came down many a time to their level, guided them, and elevated them in their beliefs and practices so that they would also reach the supreme understanding of the One Reality In so doing, he took meticulous care to remove false notions and superstitions which plagued their respective paths Thus he proved himself to be a master in all fields of knowledge and practice, whether *Vaisnavism, Śaivism, Śakti cult, Tantra, Mantra* or *Yoga*

To those who had crossed over the barriers of 'isms,' *Śankara* presented 'boquets' of meditation verses, (*Vedānta stotrā-s*) for regular recitation, reflection and meditation A complete list of all such meditation verses and hymns by *Śankara* has, perhaps, not been compiled so far A good many hymns have been composed by him, while a good many have been attributed to him In the list of *stotrā-s* given in the Appedix are included those which are popularly believed to be his compositions

AN INTRODUCTION TO *PRAKRIYĀ GRANTHĀ-S*

by Svāmī Chinmayānanda

Finite words can never hope to express the Infinite which is the theme of discussion in the 'subjective science' of the Self. Therefore, the *Ṛsī-s* must have had an unenviable joy, indeed, in expressing the inexpressible, in describing the indescribable, in explaining that which is really inexplicable. The Self is experienced only on transcending the mind-intellect. Language is a medium of communication between intellects; therefore, words by themselves cannot express and communicate the knowledge of the supreme *Brahman*, and this is an accepted declaration of all *Rsī-s* and prophets of the world. Yet we find that there are so many scriptures, every one of them a masterpiece of perfection, each communicating successfully the mystic experiences of its Master. Since the scriptures are compelled to use the prevalent diction of its age and of the area of its birth, the words used therein must have a mystery of suggestiveness about them. Hence, the unique style of all scriptures in the world.

To explore the suggestiveness, not at all obvious to the unprepared student, he must get a special training. This we gain through a careful and exhaustive study of the *prakriyā*-books. These are books that help us to open up and enter into the spirit and contents of the scriptural text (*Śāstra*). To help the *Vedāntik* students, *Śankara* has fathered many such elementary text books, each having a distinct standard for itself. The most elementary text, meant for the beginner, is *Tattva-bodha*. The topics dealt with in *Tattva-bodha* are again elaborated, on a larger canvas, in *Ātma-bodha*. These very fundamental ideas are again discussed and more vividly brought to us in his *Vivekacūdāmani*, wherein the eloquent philosophic ideas are made to spread in dazzling colours upon the high walls and wide ceilings of the vast Palace of Knowledge.

The *Mahāvākyā-s*

The anxious teacher in *Śaṅkara* must have felt that, though these three textbooks can introduce any student to a clear glimpse of the silent and peaceful fields of *Advaita* philosophy, they do not initiate the seeker into the mysteries that lie in the heart of the incomparable, great statements of the *Vedā-s*, the *Mahāvākyā-s* *Vedānta* accepts the four great statements of the *Vedā-s* as the most authentic *mahāvākyā-s* in our culture They define and declare the Infinite *Brahman*, and advise the seeker upon the royal means of gaining the Transcendental Reality They do reflect the student's direct moments of Realization, and effectively dramatize the thunderous roar of his confirmation

'Consciousness is *Brahman*' (*Prajñānam Brahma*) is the definition of the supreme Reality behind the ever-changing phenomenal things and beings 'That Thou art' (*Tat Tvam Asi*) is the teacher's advice The students, in his seat of meditation, realizes subjectively in himself 'This Self within is *Brahman*' (*Ayam Ātma Brahma*) Last comes the hallelujah that surges in the bosom of the liberated sage in the student, and he, in his sense of fulfilment and bliss immeasurable, confirms in a mad roar of joy and wonder, 'I am *Brahman*' (*Aham Brahma Asmi*)

Of these four *Mahāvākyā-s*, the statements containing the teacher's entire instruction is 'That Thou art ' This *mahāvākya*, of a mere three words, has packed in its mysterious depths endless suggestions and unsuspected imports An ordinary student, in spite of all his deep studies of the *Upaniṣad-s*, may not be able to handle this *mantra* properly in his seat of meditation unless he learns how to open this fabulous treasure-chamber, and gets fully instructed on how to enter and move about amidst its precious but certainly confusing labyrinth

Vākya Vṛtti

Exposition of this pithy but fragrant sentence (*vākya*) is what is accomplished by *Ācārya Śankara* in the simple-looking booklet of fifty-three verses called *Vākya-vṛtti* Here we have an exhaustive exposition (*vṛtti*) of the great statement (*mahāvākya*) 'That Thou art ' With the thoroughness of an artist, with the precision of a scientist, with the delightful patience of a flower opening itself, nodding to the warm breeze in a spring-time garden, *Śankara*'s *Vākya Vṛtti* dissects the great statement *Tat-tvam-asi* and shows the student that the Self in him is the Self everywhere, the *Brahman* This *mahāvākya* is considered as containing all the instructions necessary for a spiritual seeker and, accordingly is called the *upadeśa-vākya*.

The meaning of the words (*vācyārtha*) helps us to get at, no doubt, the meaning of the entire sentence (*vākyārtha*) And to explain and demonstrate clearly the depth-meaning (*laksyārtha*) of the statement, so pregnant and sacred, is called *vākya-vṛtti*

Initiation

In order to make this declaration bless the individual life, each student needs some help as a kind of initiation. From the study of the text in the *Upaniṣad-s* the student 'receives the fire from above ' He has to, thereafter, convert this 'fire' into 'light' to illumine his path and to enlighten the world around plunged in darkness This sacred process of 'converting fire into light' is called 'initiation.

The term 'initiation' bristles dangerously with mischievous misconception viciously gathered into its embrace in the timeless conspiracy between imperfect teachers and idle seekers Today, as the term stands, 'initiation' suggests itself to the common man some strange ritualistic fantasy, an epileptic convulsion of religious pageantry, or a mysterious 'touch' that

would accomplish a miracle, by a pseudo teacher upon a *tāmasik* student This is but a poetic exaggeration satisfying only to the mystery-mongers, a psychological prop for the emotional and a powerful suggestion to the sentimental

To the rational minded alert intellectuals, 'initiation' is the teacher guiding the student's entire mind's attention to a creative source in himself—behind all the perceivable, known fields including his own thoughts and emotions This process is called meditation.

Unfoldment

On awakening to his Self within, the individualised self, the ego, the *jīva* in the seeker, realizes the *Brahman* Such a man, Liberated-in-life (*Jīvan-mukta*) lives a natural state of peaceful recognition of his true identity with the *Brahman* the *sahaja samādhī* Never can the Realized One ever come to live identified with his body-mind-intellect complex and play the fool amidst the world of objects, as the *jīva*-ego

The Liberated-in-life (*Jīvan-mukta*) certainly lives amidst us, as one of us, perceiving clearly world we are so familiar with But he sees the world now in a new light He recognises it as a gorgeous expression of the very Self within him He can no longer be fascinated by the beautiful objects and the charming beings around him Not that he runs away from the world, certainly he lives and acts amidst us, but no more as a slave to the happenings, but as a saviour of the age and its culture.

He accepts everything
And
He reflects everything,
Yet
He keeps nothing
like a mirror

ŚAṄKARA'S ĀTMA-BODHA

by Svāmī Harināmānanda

In the Indian spiritual tradition, *Ādi Śankarācārya* is known for his commentaries on the *Prasthāna-traya* These are very profound works with elaborate polemics against all other existing systems of philosophy Unless one has a good grounding in the *Sat-darśana*, it is difficult to follow the arguments. Further, they are not of much use to a *sādhaka* who is interested in Self-realization and not in intellectual gymnastics, a mere head-trip .Fortunately, for the benefit of those who have neither the competence nor the patience to study these elaborate *bhāsyā-s*, the great *Ācārya* wrote several introductory manuals usually referred to as *Prakaranā-s* *Ātma-bodha* is one these works consisting of sixty-eight stanzas

The title of the work, *Ātma-Bodha* (आत्मबोध), can be interpreted either as *Ātmanah-bodhah* (आत्मनः बोधः), Knowledge of the Self, or *Ātmā eva Bodhaḥ* (आत्मा एव बोधः), i.e 'Self that is Knowledge by nature' In the course of the work, *Ādi Śankara* shows us that the Self is of the nature of Pure Consciousness He also indicates the means to realize (know) this Self. According to the *Upaniṣad-s* or *Vedānta*, man's ignorance of his true Self is the root cause of *āra*, i e , the in-completeness and misery of ordinary human existence in the world All the different endeavours of man to acquire, aggrandise and indulge in money, pleasures, fame, power, etc., do not lead him to a condition of total fulfilment

The *Upanisad-s* (*Vedānta*) unanimously say that *karma* (action) cannot lead man to the goal of the Infinite and the Eternal. The finite can never become the Infinite by any effort or addition Then, what shall we do? Is there no solution to the problem? 'Yes, there is,' the *Ṛsī-s* declare joyously Man is essentially the Infinite, his ignorance of this fact is the

cause of this bondage Ignorance is removed only by knowledge not by *karma* Bondage is only apparent, not real, hence liberation (*moksa*) is possible In his *Ātma-bodha*, *Śankarācārya* starts the exposition with the above assertion that knowledge (*bodha*) is the direct means to Liberation Just as light alone can remove darkness, knowledge reveals what is the fact, while *karma* attains, transforms, generates or purifies Till the truth regarding the Self is known, this world of plurality and finitude appears very real This Self is Non-dual *Brahman*, the substratum for the appearance of the finite subject, *jīva*, and the objective world, *jagat*

What is the nature of this Self? It is defined in two ways

1 in its essence, and
2 in its relation to this world (*svarūpa laksana* and *tatastha lakṣana*)

The essential definition of the *Ātmā* is that It is pure Existence-Consciousness-Bliss In relation to the world, it is that from which the world appears, in which it exists, and into which it finally disappears The *Brahman* (*Ātman*) does not become this world, it only appears as this multiplicity of names and forms like the rope appearing as snake The appearance has always a substratum, it is the ignorance, non-apprehension of the substratum that gives rise to all mis-apprehensions the world-appearance In this apparent world, all distinctions are due to the *upādhī-s* or conditionings through which the one Self is seen The diversity persists as long as these conditionings are not negated So the one *Ātman* appears as many individual souls (*jīvā-s*) through the conditionings These conditionings are the *sthūla, sūkṣma* and *Kārana śarīrā-s*

A STUDY OF *ŚAṄKARA'S BHĀṢYA**

On the Bhagavad Gītā

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* represents a unique stage in the development of Indian culture It has a series of commentaries from the great creators of Indian thought and life like *Śrī Śankarācārya* and *Śrī Rāmānujācārya* Even today, it stands as a great book of inspiration Commentators like *Śankara* and *Rāmānuja* have contributed their own thoughts in expounding the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and have also found confirmation of their thoughts in it From the commentary of *Śankarācārya,* it is clear that he believed that the *Gītā* had the same prestige and glory as the *Upanisad-s* It not only makes an intellectual clarification of the problems of life, but also unearths life's fundamental ground so that light may be thrown upon the complex formation of life

Śankara does not forsake, even in his study of the *Gītā*, his central standpoint the identification of *Jīva* and *Brahman*, and also illusoriness of the world He evaluates the different disciplines of spiritual life, such as *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, laid down for the pursuit of Truth Each of these disciplines have a value of its own, inasmuch as it releases us from bondage at different planes of existence In many chapters *Śankara* has given his reflections on *Karma-yoga* He sees the importance of *Karma-yoga* and throws great light on the place of *Karma* in our life, and traces out its connections with the higher phases of expression in spiritual life According to him, the *Gītā* takes note of many stages or expressions of *Karma*

1 as a *method of discipline* in the social order and the source of enjoyment in life after death,

---

* Reprinted from The Cultural Heritage of India Vol II (Second Edition Revised and Enlarged) published by The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Goal Park, Calcutta-700 029

2 as a *principle of duty* based on the categorical imperative,

3 as a method of inward *spiritual discipline,* and

4 as the *waking up of the Cosmic Will* in us and its application to the service of the world.

But in his general philosophical outlook he has not laid any emphasis on *Karma* He has denounced it as not a proper method of realisation of Truth But while commenting on the *Gītā,* which presents the dynamic side of life, he has developed it in all its phases, presented it as one with the dynamic being, and pointed out its values as a method of spiritual expression, spiritual uplift and effective spiritual inspiration on the earthly plane.

The first three disciplines mentioned above represent *Karma* in the former sense and the last one in the latter sense In the dynamic side of our life, *karma* exhibits itself as a force of social adjustment and as a method of spiritual awakening, the upward urge in which life exhibits itself as a constant inward force for a higher illumination and awakening *Karma* is not an all too earthly concern, it has the constant urge of identifying itself with the Cosmic-will through which the new epochs of life get their formation and inspiration The relation between spiritual aspiration and the movement of the Cosmic-will is very intimate.

When *Śrī Krṣna,* the Master, enjoins upon *Arjuna* to be the instrument of his activities in the world order, he was really invoking in him the Cosmic-will which is above all human ethical considerations Here the dynamic side gets the fullest expression and is above all the ordinary and normal expressions of the will The normal expressions are eloquent in the *Vedā-s* as supplying the root of satisfaction in the performance of sacrifices, and in the upbuilding of the social order on the conservation of values But it cannot go above them and call in the superior force that stands above all normatives and impresses the movement of the Cosmic-will in

life through all creative formations This is really *Karma* of the Supreme above the normal standard of values It all depends upon the higher opening in our being which removes all distinction between the human-will and the Divine-will Emphasizing this at the end of His message, after reviewing all the forms of discipline, *Śrī Krsna* inculcates the complete resignation of the inner being to achieve the dynamic identification of *our being* with the Divine This is supposed to be the highest discipline, but *Śankara*, true to his philosophical conception, has interpreted this discipline to be adjuring all dynamical aspirations and finally to fix in the Transcendence

Śankara has emphasized the 'duty for duty's sake' conception because it releases man from all vital solicitations, and imports into spiritual life effective movement of will without any earthly attraction and satisfaction The 'duty for duty's sake' conception has this significance that it moves our *active being* with a new meaning and a new light, this is a requisite for the spiritual formation of the *will* But later, the higher stage in will-expression emerges as dedication of the being in complete surrender

With this dynamic formation another phase of spiritual life is brought out—the nucleus of life of spirit in devotion In the *Gītā* this devotion has a great significance, inasmuch as it opens a new phase in the dynamic life and helps to realize God as lover and sustainer of all devotees Devotion is really complete withdrawing of *being* and merging it in the manifested Divine The immediate fruit of this is the cosmic manifestation of the Divine through all Nature's forces and in our heart of hearts as master, sustainer, ultimate rest, and the great friend This phase in spiritual life is a great necessity, it frees our minds from the ordinary course of life and presents the great life-force pervading the whole cosmos and our life The Divine is all-pervading and all-controlling, and manifests Its greatness and powers through all the forces in Nature, and to spiritual insight Nature's forces are not purely natural they have a Supernatural Being under whose guidance they work The divine revelation through Nature

has therefore a deep meaning, as the whole course of events in Nature gets a deeper meaning as reflecting the Divine-will

Similarly, in man this insight exhibits the movements of our being completely in spirit also as an exhibition of the immanent Divinity functioning in human society In both the places the Divine is revealed as power, but in devotion, along with power, a friendship and kinship are also exhibited The *Gītā* is eloquent about it and a complete surrender in this spirit of friendship is enjoined upon us as helping in all circumstances especially in spiritual growth and, therefore, the *Gītā* has given explicit direction to be of the same mind with the Divine, to be always devout and devoutly moving in worship and similar activities

This privilege is attainable only when the seeker is not envious of anybody, when he has been kind to everything, and when he dedicates himself in Spirit, in mind and intelligence to the Divine He then attains a fruition so that he is not disturbed by anybody nor disturbs anybody He maintains an equilibrium in being and equanimity in mind Devotion transcends realm of *vibhūti* and reveals the intimate relationship between the Divine and the human, and establishes man's higher possiblities in the Divine order This spirit of devotion helps the realization of *Hiranyagarbha* as the first evolute in the cosmic order

The *Sāmkhya* and the *Pātañjala* emphasize meditation on *Hiranyagarbha* and *Īśvara* as helping the final realisation The *Gītā* has not overlooked it because the path of meditation is an analytical penetration into the Transcendental It is a method of getting into the Reality by removing the layers of *being*, the formations of *prakrti* It requires perfect equipoise, balance of being, and complete detachment, for, the least vibration will break equanimity The more the initiate rises up towards illumination, the more he will feel that the subtlest layer of being is filled with the revelation of *buddhi* as the cosmic principle This is the finest emergence, and meditation

on it has the beneficial effect of giving us acquaintance with the potential Divine

The *Gītā*, according to *Śankara*, has place for three fundamental categories of existence as *Ksara*, *Aksara* and *Purusottama* *Ksara* is the order of evolutes—the changing principles in the universe *Aksara* is the non-relational trancendental principle between *Kṣara* and *Aksara* which controls everything in the world and is the source of perpetual knowledge and bliss In the course of evolution, all the finite creatures may contact *Purusottama* and be endowed with all His powers and virtues, and proceed further They may transcend these virtues which may have a cosmic character and influence, but which cannot give them ultimate satisfaction associated with removal of all concentration and limitation in the *Akṣara Brahman*

Purusottama is a stage which is indeed attractive, inasmuch as it removes qualities evolved in the *Prakrti* and gives a kind of freedom, but the personal life still lingers in a beatific form and with all bliss associated with it

But this, according to *Śankara*, is not the final stage of evolution which comes with the complete enthronement in transcendence, in detachment from the dynamic principles, however fine and glorious *Śankara* thinks that this is the highest promise of the life of knowledge and in his interpretation of complete self-surrender He has thought of the Absolute as the highest pitch of realization, for it removes the basis of personal knowledge and consciousness completely. In the *Gītā*, *Śankara* never loses sight of this metaphysical position, but only indicates with splendid clearness how life, seeking spiritual light, passes through all the ways and paths, comes to the final illumination, and how in its spontaneous and natural inspiration it passes through all the stages in the growth of consciousness and completely removes all limitations in the transcendental apex of being This is the fundamental position of *Śankara* as commentator of the *Gītā*

A Brief Introduction to the Brahma Sūtrā-s

Brahmacārī Vinaya Caitanya

Prasthāna means an authority There is a three-fold authority in *Hindūism*, called the *Prasthāna-traya* they are the *Upanisad-s*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* and the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* According to Sage *Bādarāyana*, these three constitute the canons of *Vedānta Darśana* The *Upaniṣad-s* are known as *Śruti-prasthāna*, the *Gītā* as *Smrti-prasthāna*, and the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* as *Nyāya-prasthāna*

Characteristics of the Sūtrā-s

The *Brahma-sūtrā-s* were composed by Sage *Bādarāyana* There are 555 *Sūtrā-s* in four chapters A *sūtra* should have minimum letters and the smallest words of extreme profundity It should be meaningful, clear and free from doubts The words in a *sūtra* must have a definite purpose It should be able to answer a number of queries. Many meanings will be encrusted in a *sūtra* The adjectives used must not transgress the rules of grammar It must not neglect the meaning and consistency There should not be any repetition of the same word in the same *sūtra*, even if there is a repetition, it must have a different meaning and purpose. There must be a definite connection between one *sūtra* and the next

The '*Brahma-sūtrā-s* are called the *Vedānta-Mīmāmsā*. *Mīmāṁsā* means analysis, so the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* are an analysis of *Vedānta* This is also known as *Śārīraka-Mīmāmsā* because it deals with the Indweller, *Ātman*, inside the body

Necessity of the Sūtrā-s

One may ask, why at all should we analyse *Vedānta*? What are we going to gain by it? The answer is that a word or a sentence in a certain *Upaniṣad* may seemingly contradict a statement of another *Upaniṣad*, hence the need for analysis

of *Vedānta* for a clear understanding This is what is done by *Bādarāyana* in the *Brahma-sūtrā-s* *Śabdārtha-vicāra* is necessary

The *Vedā-s* are *apauruseya*, and for the non-anthropic, the scripture alone is the means *Apauruṣeya viṣaye śāstrameva pramānam Vedānta* says that *Ātman* is *Brahman*. And only in the *Vedā-s*, we find *Ātman* and *Brahman* well explained Being limitless (*brhat*), from which everything is born, which expands itself into the world, is *Brahman* *Brahman* cannot exclude anything and cannot exclude me (*aham*), the *jīva* *Jīva-Brahma aikyam* is the subject matter of *Vedānta*. According to the *Śruti*, the one who knows not the *Vedā-s*, knows not the *Brahman* *Brahman* is considered to be born of the *Upaniṣad-s* The *Upaniṣad-s* are a body of knowledge which reveal the knowledge of *Brahman*. *Śabda* becomes the *pramāṇa*, the means The knowledge of *Brahman* is identical with *mokṣa*, for, this knowledge itself is the means and the end

To know a thing, use of proper means is unavoidable. Indifference in using a means will distort the knowledge so gained The *Upaniṣad-s* are definitely to be understood in their proper perspective and suggestiveness So the validity of the knowledge gained by using a means depends upon' the efficient and proper use of the means If there is any deficiency in the *pramāṇa*, the knowledge gained will be distorted, so the means must be free from defects This is the case with *śabda-pramāṇa* also If the *Brahman* is myself, definitely, it is not known to me to be so All the means I have at my disposal for gaining knowledge are about the limited objects only For knowing the *Brahman* I have no *pramāṇa* at all If it could have been known by the means at my disposal, I would have known it long ago So I seek refuge in the words of the *Śruti*. These words are to be understood properly, for there can be many a doubt the same word may mean differently at times How to understand whether a particular word means a certain thing or something else? This we have to understand with reference to what has gone before and what is to follow Here in this analysis, the

Brahma-sūtrā-s, the means itself is the subject matter The purpose of the analysis is to understand the *pramāna* without a trace of doubt The *pramāna* is the *Śruti* or the *Upanisad-s* To know it we will use logic and our own experience

Even though Truth is one, there is no limit to the wrong notions about it Many will erect their own theories of *Ātmā* and project new systems All these systems of thought also take their supporting statements from the *Śruti* Therefore, a thorough analysis is necessary to clear the doubts in the *pramāna* Since these systems of thought cull statements from the *Śruti* in support of their theories, they have to be encountered and demolished with logic and knowledge born out of experience. Also, these *Śruti* statements should be explained in the correct light

If there is a possibility, the human mind is capable of jumping into wrong notions At moments, one becomes a nihilist All these must be negated, destroyed, contradicted without any sentiments, if we are interested in the Truth This is the work of *Mimāmsā* By constant study and reflection we will be freed from all doubts and will possses a mind in which no more doubts will arise

Being a *Mimāṁsā grantha*, the *Brahma-Sūtrā-s* are based on pure logic The first chapter is called *Jijñāsā-adhyāya* It establishes that the *Brahman* is to be known The second chapter is called *Samanvaya-adhyāya* It explains that all the *Vedānta Vākyā-s* lead to the knowledge of one and the same supreme *Brahman* The third Chapter is *Avirodha-adhyāya* The error in all the other schools of thought are brought out in this chapter. The fourth chapter is *Sādhanā-adhyāya* Here the methods of attaining *Brahman* and the *Sādhanā* to be undertaken are explained

Why a Commentary on the Sūtrā-s

Now, the *Brahma-Sūtrā*-s being cryptic and laden with meaning, require a commentary for clear understanding To

open the gates of a palace a key is necessary, and the key to *the Brahma-sūtrā-s* is provided by *Śankarācārya* in his famous *Bhāṣya* on them This is known as the *Śārīraka-Mīmāmsā-bhāshya* Being the first commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtrā-s*, *Śankara* starts with the necessity of a commentary. He proves that there is only one Reality in keeping with the *Śruti*, logic and experience He then propounds the theory of *adhyāsa* (super-imposition) Unless the theory of super-imposition is established, the discussions on *Vedānta-sūtrā-s* cannot begin Super-imposition pre-supposes ignorance, ignorance of Truth is the cause for the super-imposition of non-Truth Hence ignorance must be removed This is done by knowledge, knowledge is gained by the study of the means. Therefore, *Śāstrik* analysis is undertaken Thus the *Bhāṣya* commences with an elaborate introduction.

Chapter V

ŚAṄKARA'S LEGACY : THE FOUR DISCIPLES

Some Interesting Studies

If it is asked : 'What is the greatest contribution that *Śrī Śaṅkara* had made?' The answer would be: 'The exposition of the true import of the scriptures through his various commentaries and books.' It is not definitely known how many books he had written, but it is said that *Śrī Chidghanānandā Svāmījī* of *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa* Mission had a collection of over one hundred and fifty books of *Śaṅkara* To read through these books even once, it would take a number of years. To study them, even a whole lifetime will not be sufficient, to realize the great principles and subjectively experience them, it might taken even a series of lives. *Śankara*'s language has a rare combination of profundity of ideas, subtlety of exposition and fluidity of expression.

Apart from a vast literature comprising commentaries, fundamental textbooks, devotional hymns, etc., *Śankara* left behind a legacy of great institutions of perfect discipline and organisation. But, however great the ideas of the Master be, if they were not grasped and brought into practice, they would have been of no use to posterity. In this, the Master was ably assisted by his innumerable disciples, who were all great, especially the four most distinguished of them, namely *Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Hastāmalaka* and *Totaka* One might even concede that they were all as great as the Master himself

In the *Śankara Dig Vijayam* of *Vidyāranya*, there are many references to the four disciples in glowing terms and analogies

The poet wonders whether they were the four *puruṣārthā-s* in human form, or the four *Vedā-s*, or the four *muktī-s* (*salokya, samīpya, sarūpya* and *sayūjya*) or the four faces of *Brahmā*, the Creator. It is interesting to note that the characteristics of these groups of four have corresponding resemblances in the mental and intellectual make up of the four disciples. The number four has a special significance in *Vedānta* and, as *Svāmī Jñānānanda Bhāratī* would like to put it, it has a special significance to the four disciples and their internal make up For example, when we carefully analyse the *antahkarana*, the inner equipment, it is seen to consist of four strata the *citta, mana, buddhi, ahamkāra*. *Citta* is the passive receptacle of all *samṣkārā-s* (*vāsanā-s*). *Manas* is the mind which is restless and easily swayed by inner *saṁskārā-s*, and by the objects of the external world *Buddhi* is the intellect which decides and determines all activities. *Ahamkāra* is the principle which permeates all actions and experiences as the 'I,' including the state of deep sleep It may be stated generally that *ahamkāra* is assertive, *buddhi* is decisive, *manas* is restless and *citta* is passive

Padmapāda may well be compared to *ahamkāra*. *Sureśvara* would not yield until he was convinced, and he may be compared to *buddhi* The silent *Hastāmalaka* may well be compared to *citta* and *Toṭaka* to *manas*, the restless mind, ever engaged in all kinds of service to the Master.

Jñānānanda Bhāratī goes further to draw parallels from the various *ślokā-s* of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* And about the famous line, which occurs twice in the *Gītā* (IX-34 and XVIII-65) *Manmanā bhava mad-bhakto, Madyājī mām namaskuru.* There are four paths indicated with one goal to reach that is Me—he says The first path, *manmanā bhava* (with mind ever concentrated upon Me) fits in with the ever inward turned *Hastāmalaka* The second process, *mad-bhakta* (devoted to Me) can be aptly said of *Padmapāda*, the ever-devoted and constantly watchful disciple who had the privilege to save the life of the Master twice. *Sureśvara* fits in with the third

process, *madyājī* (with all your spiritual endeavours aimed at me), hence, though the confirmed ritualist that he was, after his change over to new path shown by the Master, he transferred his allegiance from *Karma* to the Self, i e , directed his spiritual endeavours from *Karma* to the Self, Me *Totaka*, who did all kinds of service to the Master, fits in with the fourth process, *mām-namaskuru* (ever bowing down and prostrating to Me) The 'Me,' the Self, the objective of all these four paths, may be taken as *Śankara* himself

Again in the following statement in *Gītā* (XI-55), we find a parallel in the characters and make-up of the four disciples

Mat-karma krt mat-paramo, mad-bhaktah sanga-varjitah,
nirvairah sarva-bhūteṣu, yah sa māmeti pāndava

Mat-karma-kṛt (he who does actions for Me) easily applies to *Totaka,*

Mat-paramah (who looks upon Me as the Supreme) applies to *Sureśvara* who was converted to the conviction that the Self was the Supreme and not *karma,*

Mad-bhaktah (devoted to Me) can be said of *Padmapāda,* and *Sanga-varjitah* (free from attachment) aptly fits in with the make-up of *Hastāmalaka*

The last quality enumerated in the above *Gītā* verse, such as, *Nirvairaḥ sarva bhutesu* (who bears enmity towards none) refers to all the disciples, it was one common trait they all had, qualifying them for the great task their Master had given them

Once again, another statement from the *Gītā* (IV-34) bears close resemblance to their internal makeup

"Tad viddhi pranipātena, pari-praśnena sevayā"

Know It by surrender, questioning and service

In this, 'know' can denote *Hastāmalaka*, who was ever aware of the Self that he was, even before he came in contact with

Śankara, 'surrender' can denote *Padmapāda*, the devoted; 'questioning' *Sureśvara*, who held a great disputation with the Master, and 'service' obviously *Totaka* 'It' is the goal of all the four, which can denote *Śaṅkara* himself.

Again, it is said in the *Gītā* (VII-16), that 'four types of people seek Me, the suffering, the inquisitive, the seeker of wealth and the wise ' One might be tempted to equate *Padmapāda* with the first category, the suffering, since he first approached the Master at *Kāśī* with a request to save him from 'drowning in the ocean of *samsāra* ' *Sureśvara* fits in with the 'inquisitive' type, *Totaka* with the 'seeker of wealth,' the wealth here being spiritual wealth, and *Hastāmalaka* with the 'wise ' All the four had sought refuge in the Master, *Śankara*

Thus, we have in these four great disciples of *Śankara* an exemplification of the various levels and various paths, a rare phenomenon in the spiritual history of the country, nay, of the whole world

Chapter VI

THE FOUR *MAṬHĀ-S* AND THE FOUR DISCIPLES

The Four Seats of Transcendental Wisdom

In order that the great wisdom of the *Ṛṣī-s* may not be lost to posterity, *Śrī Śankara* decided to establish four 'seats of wisdom' (*mathā-s)* in the four parts of the country It was envisaged that the spiritual welfare of the whole country would be looked after by these four *mathā-s* from their centres in the east, west, north and south The wisdom of the *Rsī-s* has been contained in the *Vedā-s*, which are four in number The monks (*Svāmī*-s) and novices (*Brahmacārī-s*) belonging to the *mathā-s* were to study all the scriptural literature in general Apart from this, they were enjoined to make a special study of one of the four *Vedā-s* The *mahāvākya* contained in that particular *Veda* would be, for them, the subject of deeper contemplation and meditation

Śankara had gained during his travels an intimate knowledge of the various systems and practices followed by the innumerable sects in the country The country was infested with these numberless factions, each having its own champions, quarrelling incessantly with all other factions In the *Śankara Vijayam*, more than seventy such sects have been enumerated *Śankara* had met their leaders and, with the assistance of his disciples, reformed them and awakened them to the higher Vision of Unity as proclaimed in the *Upanisad-s* They thus commanded respect and had influence over all the leaders of the various sects

In his maturity of wisdom, the *Ācārya* grouped all such spiritual leaders under ten categories, the *Daśanāmī-s*, and put them under the allegiance of the four *mathā-s* They were given ten titles, namely *Sarasvatī, Bhāratī, Purī, Tīrtha, Āśrama, Giri, Parvata, Sāgara, Vana* and *Āranya* These titles have been followed over the centuries and thus we have today the names of various *Svāmī*-s, such as *Dayānanda Sarasvatī*, *Jñānānanda Bhāratī*, *Totā Purī*, *Rāma Tīrtha*, *Ānanda Giri*, and so on The *Brahmacārī-s* belonging to the four *mathā-s* were also given titles such as *Caitanya, Svarūpa, Ānanda* and *Prakāśa* (e g *Vinaya Caitanya, Dakṣa Svarūpa* etc)

Jagannātha Purī (the Eastern Maṭha)

The eastern *Matha* was established at *Jagannātha Purī*, and *Padmapāda* was the first *Ācārya* The titles of *sannyāsin-s* belonging to this *Matha* are *Vana* and *Āraṇya*, and the *Brahmacārī-s* have the title *Prakāśa* They are enjoined to make special studies of the *Rg-Veda* and meditate on the *mahāvākya*· ***Prajñānam Brahma***, which occurs in the *Aitareya Upaniṣad* belonging to the *Rg-Veda*

This *Matha* is called the **Govardhana Maṭha** The *tīrtha* here is the *Mahodadhi* (Bay of Bengal) The divinity worshipped here is Lord *Viṣṇu* '*Jagannātha,*' also called '*Purusottama,*' and His *Śakti* is *Vimalā* The spiritual welfare of the eastern part of the country is entrusted to this *Matha*

Śriṅgerī (the Southern *Maṭha*)

The southern *Matha* was established at *Śringerī* (now in the State of *Karnātaka*) and *Sureśvara* was the first *Ācārya* The titles of *Sarasvatī*, *Bhāratī* or *Purī* are given to the *sannyāsin-s* belonging to this *Matha* The *Brahmacārī-s* have the title of *Caitanya* They are enjoined to make special studies of the *Yajur-Veda* and meditate on the *Mahāvākya* ***Aham Brahmāsmi***, which occurs in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad*, belonging to the *Śukla-Yajur-Veda*

This *Maṭha* is known as the ***Śāradā Maṭha***. The *tīrtha* here is the river *Tungabhadrā* The divinity worshipped here is Lord *Śiva* (*Candramaulīśvara*), and His *Śakti* is *Śrī Śāradā* The spiritual welfare of the southern part of India is entrusted to this *Matha*

It will be interesting to note that the Rāmakrsna Mission is supposed to belong to this *Matha*, the *guru* of *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa* being *Totā Purī* The *Svāmī-s* of the Divine Life Society, *Ṛṣikeśa*, and *Paramaguru*, *Śrī Śivānanda* (*Sarasvatī*) belong to this *Matha* The Chinmaya Mission also owes allegiance to this *Maṭha* since *Svāmī Chinmayānanda* (*Sarasvatī*) belongs to this *Matha*. All the *Brahmacārī-s* of the Chinmaya Mission have the title *Caitanya*

Dvārakā (the Western *Maṭha*)

The Western *Matha* was established in *Dvārakā* on the shores of the western sea, (now in the State of *Gujarāt*) and *Hastāmalaka* was the first *Ācārya*. The titles of *sannyāsin-s* belonging to this *Matha* are *Tīrtha* and *Āśrama*, and the *Brahmacārī-s* have the title *Svarūpa* They are enjoined to make special studies of *Sāma-Veda* and meditate on the *mahāvākya* ***Tat Tvam Asi***, which occurs in the *Chāndogya Upanisad* belonging to the *Sāma-Veda*

This *Matha* is called ***Kālikā Maṭha*** The *tīrtha* here is the river *Gomatī* The divinity worshipped here is Lord *Śiva* (*Siddheśvara*) and His *Śakti*, *Bhadra Kālī* There is also a version which says that this seat is called *Śāradā Matha* The spiritual welfare of the western part of India is entrusted to this *Matha*.

Jyotirdhāma (the Northern *Maṭha*)

The Northern *Matha* was established at *Jyotirdhāma* (now known as *Jośimath*) in the *Himālayās*, about thirty kilometers down from the famous pilgrim centre at *Badarīnātha* *Totaka*

was the first *Ācārya* The Titles of *Girī*, *Parvata* and *Sāgara* are given to the *sannyāsin-s* belonging to this *Matha.* The *Brahmacārī-s* have the title of *Ānanda.* They are enjoined to make special studies of the *Atharva Veda* and meditate on the *mahāvākya* ***Ayam Ātma Brahma***, which occurs in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* belonging to the *Atharva Veda.*

This *Matha* is called ***Jyotir Maṭha***. The *tīrtha* here is the river *Alakanandā* The divinity worshipped is Lord *Visnu* (*Nārāyana*), and his *Śakti* is *Pūranagirī* The spiritual welfare of the northern part of India is invested in this *Matha*

Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Maṭha

Historical and literary evidences are said to be available to prove that the *Kāmakoti Matha* at *Kāñcīpuram* was also found by *Ādi Śankarācārya* *Kāñcī* is a small town in Chingelpet district of Tamil Nadu and has a hoary past from the days of the *Pallavā* kingdom in the 4th century References to *Kāñcī* are found in *Śiva Rahasya, Mārkaṇḍeya Samhitā, Ānandagirī's Śankara Vijayam, Śankarabhyudaya* and *Patañjali Vijayam*

Kāñcī is one of the seven cities held sacred in our country, the other being *Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyā* (*Haridvāra*), *Kāśī, Āvantī (Ujjainnī)* and *Dvārakā* Of these, three are sacred to *Śiva* and three to *Visnu* *Kāñcī* is sacred to both *Kāñcī*, then ruled by the king *Rājasena*, was renovated and reconstructed according to a plan laid out by *Śankara* A geometrical pattern in the form of *Śrī Cakra* was adopted for this purpose The temple and the image of *Kāmākṣī* were placed in the *bindusthāna* (centre) and all other temples were made to face this temple The city had been the centre of learning and composite culture in ancient India Even now, all phases of the ancient religious culture are represented by their palces of worship here Besides *Śaivism* and *Vaiṣnavism*, *Kāñcī* had also been the seat of *Jainism* and *Buddhism* in ancient days

Sphaṭika Liṅgā-s

From *Badarī* and *Kedāra* in the north to *Kanyākumārī* and *Rameśvaram* in the south, numerous temples and other religious institutions bespeak, even today, of the great service rendered by *Śaṅkara* to *Hindū* religion and philosophy According to tradition, *Śaṅkara* brought from *Kailāśa* five *Sphatika lingā-s* and consecrated them at five holy places; *Mukti-linga* at *Kedāra*, *Vara-linga* at *Nīlakantha-Ksetra* in Nepal, *Mokṣa-linga* at *Cidambaram*, *Bhoga-liṅga* at *Śringeri* and *Yoga-linga* at *Kāñcī*.

The Four Great Disciples

We have a picture of the *guru-śisya paramparā* in the following *śloka* which is chanted in almost all the houses in India where children do their *sandhyā nāma*

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्द योगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ।
श्रीशङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम्
तं तोटकं वार्त्तिककारमन्यानस्मद्गुरून् सन्ततमानतोऽस्मि ।

Nārāyaṇaṁ padma-bhuvaṁ vasiṣṭhaṁ
śaktiṁ ca tat-putra-parāśaram ca
vyāsam śukam gauḍapadaṁ mahāntam
govinda yogīndram-athāsya śiṣyam,
śrī-śaṅkarācāryam-athāsya padma-pādam ca
hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam
tam totakam vārtika-kāram-anyān-
asmad-gurūn santata-mānato-'smi

Nārāyana *is the Supreme Teacher who imparted the* Brahmavidyā *to* Brahmā, *the Creator, who in turn taught it to* Śrī Vasistha *Sage* Vasistha *taught* Maharsi Śakti *and the latter taught his son,* Parāśara. Parāśara *taught his son,* Vyāsa *and*

> Vyāsa, *taught his son,* Śuka. *The* Brahma-vidyā *has been imparted down the generations through* Gaudapāda, *the great* Mahātmā, *to the best among* Yogī-s, guru Govindapāda, *and through him to his disciple,* Śrī Śankarācārya. Śrī Śankarācārya *imparted the great knowledge to his four disciples, namely,* Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Totaka, *and the author of the* Vārttika, Śrī Śureśvarācārya. *The* śloka *ends by saying . 'I always prostrate to all the above* gurū-s *and others down the lineage including my own beloved* guru, *the last link in the chain.'*

In India, the wisdom of the *Rsī-s* has been perpetuated through the unbroken chain of *guru-śiṣya paramparā* It was a unique blessing for *Hindūism* that not only had illustrious teachers but also equally competent and brilliant disciples who carried the torch of knowledge down through the centuries to the present times, each one not only well versed in the scriptures but also well established in their subjective realisation of the Supreme Reality (*Śrotrīyam, Brahmanistham*) It was not a 'relay-race' where the buck was simply passed on to the next in line, but a consistent effort at every stage to master the scriptures and subjectively experience its declarations formed the essential discipline in the hierarchy Thus everyone turned out to be a Master, a *Rsi*, in the link

Śankara had a number of disciples, but mention is made of the four outstanding persons in the following pages who took charge of the four *Mathā-s* established by the Master to look after the spiritual welfare of the entire country

Padmapāda

After the studies at the feet of his Master, *guru Govindpāda*, *Śankara* came to the then spiritual and cultural

centre of india, *Kāśī*, to spread the message of *Advaita Vedānta* He used to give discourses every day at *Kāśī* and a number of people came to him as students One of them was a young man from the south of India, named *Sanandana* He desired to be initiated into *sannyāsa* and *Śankara* complied with the request *Sanandana* stayed on with his Master, serving him and learning from him.

After some time, the *Ācārya* decided to go to *Badarīnātha* where he could have a comparatively quieter atmosphere to compose his commentaries on the various scriptures *Sanandana* and a few disciples joined him and, in course of time, they reached *Badarīnātha* and settled there. The king of *Jośimaṭha* arranged for the supply of all necessary materials and comforts for the *Ācārya* and his disciples for their stay and sacred work.

The *Ācārya*, apart from writing commentaries for the scriptures, also devoted time to teach the disciples· *Sanandana* was a brilliant student and would grasp things three times faster than others The Master naturally showed a little more interest in teaching him, but unfortunately the other disciple misunderstood it to be partiality on the part of the teacher and they became envious of *Sanandana*. *Śaṅkara* understood the matter.

Walking on Water · One day *Sanandana* was engaged in some work on the other bank of the river *Alakanandā* The *Ācārya*, who was in the company of other disciples, suddenly got up and called out to *Sanandana* to come to him straight away and immediately The usual path to the other bank was a circuitous one and would take some time. *Sanandana*, startled by the sudden call of the Master, started crossing the turbulent river straight across, so as to reach him in the least possible time. The current of the river would normally have washed him away, but lo! as soon as he stepped on the water a full-blown lotus sprang up to support him, and when he took his next step another lotus appeared to support his foot In his anxiety to reach his *guru*, the disciple almost ran over the waters, and wherever his feet touched down, lotuses sprang up to support him *Sanandana* was

unaware of what actually happened uptil after he had crossed the river and reached his Master. The other disciples who witnessed the miracle stood there dumb-founded. They acknowledged the great devotion that *Sanandana* had towards his *guru* which made such a miracle possible

The *Ācārya* smiled at the *śisya* who had come and prostrated at his feet and was standing ready to receive his command He declared that, in view of *Sanandana* having accomplished such a feat, he would henceforth be called '*Padmapāda,*' meaning, the one whose feet were supported by lotuses.

Padmapāda had great love and devotion for the *Ācārya* and would always keep close company with him After the completion of their work at *Badarīnātha*, the *guru* and disciples set out on a pilgrimage, carrying with them the manuscripts of the commentaries of the Master as well as other great books which had grown into enormous loads. The king again arranged for suitable transport and other facilities for their travel. They came down to the plains. After defeating *Maṇḍana Miśra* in arguments *Śaṅkara* accepted him as a disciple and all of them together set out on the triumphant march through the length and breadth of the country In the course of their travel they came to *Śrīsailam* and camped there for a few weeks.

Encounter with the *Kāpālikā-s*—While sojourning at *Śrīsailam*, the leader of the *Kāpālika* cult, *Krākaca*, had an intellectual encounter with *Śankara* and was defeated n arguments regarding the philosophy of his cult--the *Kāpālikā-s* believed in the ritual of human sacrifice to propitiate the gods. *Krākaca* could not take his defeat sportingly, but determined to do away with the *Ācārya* through foul means He hatched a plot in consultation with his chief follower, *Ugra Bhairava*, to kill the *Ācārya* by enticing him away from his group at midnight and offering him as sacrifice at the altar of their god. *Ugra Bhairava* accordingly disguised himself as a student of the *Ācārya* and gained the confidence of all those attending on the Master One

day, when nobody was around, *Urga Bhairava* started crying pathetically before the *Ācārya* The unruffled *Śankara* asked him what he wanted, whereupon he said he wanted the *Ācārya*'s head as sacrifice to the gods, so that he could attain Lord *Śiva*'s grace The *Ācārya* quietly assured him that he could have his wish but that none of the disciples should come to know of it Accordingly, he agreed to present himself at the altar of sacrifice at midnight all alone *Ugra Bhairava* returned with a smile and waited for the midnight hour

The *Ācārya*, full of compassion, kept his word and started for the altar at midnight All the disciples were fast asleep *Padmapāda* somehow started feeling restless and suddenly woke up. He scanned the place where the Master used to sleep and found him missing. Sensing some foul play, he immediately sat in meditation and invoked the grace of his chosen deity *Nrsiṁhamūrty*, and was immediately possessed by the power that he invoked.

Padmapāda, the possessed, roared aloud and rushed to the place where the *Ācārya* was to be sacrificed, reaching there within the twinkling of an eye He stormed the scene and took hold of the sword from the upraised hands of *Ugra Bhairava* who was about to strike down and behead the beloved Master. He cut down *Ugra Bhairava's* head and roled it over the altar. In the panic that followed, the rest of the *Kāpālikā-s* ran away *Śaṅkara* stood dazed at the turn of events

By that time *Padmapāda* had fallen unconscious When he was revived by the other disciples who reached there by that time, he confessed that he did not know what had actually happened All that he remembered was that he had invoked his beloved deity and nothing more The presence of mind of *Padmapāda* at the moment of a big crisis thus saved the life of the great Master

His Commentary—In the course of their travel the *Ācārya* and his disciples came across *Śrīngā Girī* (present *Śriṅgerī*) and camped there for a long time They had by that time

completed detailed study of the various *Vedāntik* books and mastered commentaries upon them. One day, *Sureśvara* (formerly *Viśvarūpa* or *Maṇḍana Miśra*) approached the *Ācārya* and sought his directive on the next work to be done The *Ācārya* asked *Sureśvara* to write a *vārttika* (a critical appreciation on the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* composed by the former *Sureśvara* took upon himself the command of the *guru* in all humility and started the work

Padmapāda, who had been observing all this, did not feel at ease with the job entrusted to *Sureśvara* by the Master. He feared that *Sureśvara* who was a *karma-vādī* (one who professed that ritualistic actions were superior to all other means for attaining permanent bliss) would not do justice to the *vārttika* which, by its very nature, was required to be in the form of a critical appreciation of the Master's work He feared that *Sureśvara*'s work would have overtones of *karma-vāda* on account of his having been a ritualist in his pre-monastic life, and thus would impair the true shade of the *Ācārya*'s teachings He even confessed his fear to his own disciples who, anxious to avert such a calamity, informed the *Ācārya* of *Padmapāda's* thinking

Śankara called *Padmapāda* and asked whether he doubted so, and the latter conceded it, whereupon *Śankara* asked *Sureśvara* to suspend his work on the *vārttika* and instead to write a book independently so as to remove the doubts of his colleagues *Sureśvara*, accordingly, composed a book called *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* (Attainment of non-action state) and dedicated it at the feet of the Master The book was read out to everybody and all, including *Padmapāda* and his disciples, appreciated the maturity and wisdom of *Sureśvara* But *Padmapāda* still did not like the idea of a *vārttika* being written on the *Bhāṣya* composed by the Master on the *Brahma-sūtrā-s*

After some time, the *Ācārya* asked *Padmapāda* to write explanatory notes (*ṭīkā*) on the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* *Padmapāda* started his work, and in due course completed his notes on the first four *sūtrā-s* and presented his work to the

Ācārya for evaluation The *Ācārya*, happy with the work, said that it trumpeted the message of *Vedānta* and named it '*Vijaya Dindimā*' (the drum-beat of victory). *Padmapāda* then enquired how his work would fare in future times, whereupon the *Ācārya* remarked that a bleak future was in store for it and it would face lots of difficulties in the course of its propagation. *Padmapāda* was sad at this prophecy He reflected over the matter and came to the conclusion that this state of affairs was brought about by his opposition to the writing of the *vārttika* by *Sureśvara*. He wanted to do something immediately by way of repentance.

His Pilgrimage—*Padmapāda* thought it best to undertake a pilgrimage to *Rāmeśvaram* in atonement of the 'sin' he had committed Thus making up his mind he went to the *Ācārya* to seek his permission to undertake the pilgrimage When *Padmapāda* confessed his sin and told the *Ācārya* everything without reservation, the Master remarked that the time was not particularly congenial for *Padmapāda* and that he might give up his *sankalpa* of pilgrimage But *Padmapāda* did not get peace of mind, so he again requested for permission to go. The *Ācārya* then consented, but warned him that since there was a likehood of dangers befalling him on the way, he should take particular care. *Padmapāda* thus started out on the pilgrimage, taking along one of his disciples for company.

They passed through *Kālāhasti*, *Kāñcīpuram* and *Śrīrangam* *Padmapāda's* uncle was living in a village near *Śrīrangam* and he visited him on the way. This uncle was a prominent leader of the ritualists and was dismayed to see his nephew championing *Advaita Vedānta*. He entered into an argument with *Padmapāda* but was easily defeated The uncle then enquired about the *Śāstra* on which *Padmapāda* had based his arguments. He was promptly shown the commentary, *Vijaya Dindimā*. The uncle borrowed it for deeper study, assuring *Padmapāda* that it would be returned to him when he came back from *Rāmeśvaram* *Padmapāda* lent his uncle the book and proceeded on his journey, and the latter burned it out of sheer jealousy

Misfortune—On his way back from *Rāmeśvaram*, *Padmapāda* visited his uncle The uncle told him that his book was accidently burnt while there was a fire in the house, and showed him the charred remains. *Padmapāda* was unhappy at the turn of events, but he consoled his uncle who pretended to be sorry, saying that he would compose a better commentary immediately This unnerved the uncle who played a foul trick to dullen the wits of his nephew by poisoning his food. The poison did have its effect, and *Padmapāda* became dull and forgetful The uncle. then hastened to persuade *Padmapāda*'s disciple to remove him from there quickly, lest any untoward incident should happen to him The disciple decided to take *Padmapāda* to the *Ācārya* and both of them immediately set forth on the journey. On the way they met a group of people returning from a visit to the *Ācārya* at *Śringerī*, and learnt from them that the Master had already left for Kerala. They directed their steps towards *Kāladi* and reached there in due course

Padmapāda's departure on pilgrimage had created a void among the disciples accompanying the *Ācārya*, and everybody was eagrerly waiting for his return When thus the weary pilgrim reached the feet of his Master, all were very happy to welcome him back. With the blessings of the *guru*, *Padmapāda* regained his intellectual brilliancy. The *Ācārya* dictated to him from his memory complete commentary which had met with destruction at his uncle's hands

Again to the Master's rescue—The existence of forces which were out to destroy the books of the *Ācārya*, if given the opportunity, was by now evident The matter was discussed seriously by the disciples King *Rājaśekhara* of Kerala, who was present at that time there, suggested that the *Ācārya* should set forth on a *Dig-vijaya* (March of Triumph), meet all the opponents of *Advaita*, and after vanquishing them, hoist the flag of *Advaita* throughout the country The disciples seconded the proposal, and when the *Ācārya* was told about it, he recollected *Vyāsa*'s instruction to undertake such a tour He, therefore, agreed to the proposal Thus started the great

triumphant march of the *Lion of Advaita* through the length and breadth of the country He visited many places, cracked many a hard nut and established the supremacy of *Advaita* over all other systems of philosophy

An eventful decade passed by---Towards the end of his tour of victory he visited *Kāmarūpa* (which is in the present State of Assam) The people of this area indulged in various ritualism and follwed the *Satī* cult Though *Śaṅkara* and his disciples were accorded a welcome, the local populance was not ready to follow his teachings Their leaders argued with *Śankara*, but were easily defeated. Then one of their leaders, *Abhinava Gupta*, hit upon a plan to kill the *Ācārya* through black magic. He secretly performed his tricks on the *Ācārya* Soon, the *Ācārya* had an attack of dysentery. The disease increased day by day and he became emaciated. The disciples were aghast at the sudden illness of the *Ācārya* They brought one of the best physicians and treated him, but to no avail.

Padmapāda once again invoked his dearest deity, *Nṛsimhamūrty*, and requested Him to reveal the cause of the disease and its remedy The Lord appeared and told him of *Abhinava Gupta's* foul play, and suggested that *Padmapāda* should counteract it by invoking opposite spells. Accordingly he started counter-actions which resulted in the lessening of the Master's disease, and within three days he was completely cured. Simultaneously, *Abhinava Gupta* contracted the disease. With all the knowledge and power he had, he could not resist *Padmapāda*'s onslaught of *mantrik* strength He fled from the place secretly, carrying the disease with him, and ultimately met with his end.

This news spread like wildfire, and everybody came to know the greatness of the *Ācārya* and his disciples. They all accepted the supremacy of the *Advaita* system by becoming the *Ācārya*'s followers The compassionate *Ācārya*, however, pointed out to them the deficiencies in their *tāntrik* worship and pursuits, and suggested remedial measures. He reformed their traditions, elevating them to greater cultural heights, and

prescribed to them the correct methods of *tāntrik* worship culminating in the experience of Non-dual *Brahman.*

By this time the *Ācārya* had almost finished his work, and the disciples were all trained and competent to carry out his mission Realising this, *Ācārya Śankara* retired to *Kedāranātha* in the *Himālayās.* His work was over and he declared his intention to give up the mortal body The disciples were naturally very unhappy, but the Master consoled them He picked out four of his greatest disciples, *Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Hastāmalaka* and *Totakam* and appointed them as the pontiffs of the four *Maṭhā-s* he had established *Padmapāda* was asked to take charge of the *Purī Matha* in the east of India and spread the mission work from there in the whole of the eastern region The other disciples occupied the *Śringerī, Dvārakā* and *Jyotir Mathā-s* respectively, spearheading the mission work in their areas

Sureśvarācārya

One of the distinguished disciples of *Ādi Śankara, Sureśvara* became a follower of the Master after his defeat in arguments spreading over a number of days His pre-monastic name was *Viśvarūpa* or *Mandana Miśra* He was the son of *Himāmitra,* the court *paṇdita* of the king of *Kaśmīra. Himāmitra* was rich and it is said that his house was like the palace of *Indra* *Viśvarūpa* was given a scholar's training worthy of his ancestry Early in life he sat at the feet of *Kumārila Bhatta,* the famous champion of the *Vedā-s* who stood at the forefront of those who drove out *Buddhism* (which was opposed to *Vedik* religion and culture) from India *Viśvarūpa* imbibed from *Kumārila Bhatta* an extraordinary regard for *Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā* and *Vedik* rituals, and became proficient in several branches of knowledge

When he grew up, *Viśvarūpa* found a worthy wife in *Ubhaya Bhāratī,* a daughter of *Visnu Mitra* who lived in the banks of the river *Sone* She was a great scholar and was reputed to be an incarnation of Goddess *Sarasvatī* Herself *Viśvarūpa*

was considered an incarnation of Lord *Brahmā* His deep erudition and exemplary life commanded the respect of all, so much that people felt it delicate to refer to him by his proper name and preferred to call him '*Mandana Miśra*'---the 'ornament among scholars ' This expressive epithet practically eclipsed his original name.

Late in life, he settled down in *Mahiśmatī* on the northern banks of the river *Narmadā* where his residence was described as equal to the abode of *Indra* His erudition is brought out by the graphic description that even the parrots in the cages hanging in the mansion had, by listening to the lessons taught by him to his innumerable disciples, learned to discuss among themselves the *Vedik* declarations

Meeting with *Śaṅkara*—When *Śankara* went to *Kumārila Bhatta* for *Vedāntik* discussions, the latter was about to give up his body and directed *Śankara* to *Viśvarūpa* It is worthy of note that *Kumārila Bhatta* described *Viśvarūpa*, as his dearest disciple who excelled even his Master in all branches of learning and that if *Viśvarūpa* was vanquished, the whole world may be considered as defeated. Such an encomium from the lips of the teacher is rare and shows the extraordinary merit of the disciple.

Viśvarūpa was a very staunch ritualist and held the opinion that *sannyāsa* was the refuge of those who wanted to escape the trouble and incovenience of performing the *Vedik* rites properly. So he was at first irritated by the sight of *Śankara*, but soon cooled down when he was informed that *Śankara* had come to have disputations with him For want of an equal, *Viśvarūpa* had been itching for a discussion and gladly welcomed this opportunity, secure in the conviction that victory was sure to be his. The two disputants agreed upon having *Viśvarūpa's* wife, *Ubhaya Bhāratī*, as the umpire and began their discussion the very next morning.

As *Ubhaya Bhāratī* had her household duties to attend to and prepare food for them both, she gave to each of them a

garland to wear, telling them that the person in whose neck the garland faded first was the defeated one The debate went on continuously for eighteen days, allowing time for their daily routine of religious duties, meals and rest Finally, *Viśvarūpa* admitted defeat, not only on account of his inability to establish his standpoint or to meet the arguments of *Śaṅkara*, but also on the firm conviction created in him that what *Śankara* stood for was really the Truth. He was, in due course, given *sannyāsa* and initiated into the truth of the *Upaniṣad-s*, and bestowed the *āśrama* name of *Sureśvara*

As usual with famous scholars of our land, he has not left behind him any material from which we can reconstruct his life history In the *Śankara Vijayā-s*, there is no mention at all of any child of his. It is simply said that, in anticipation of his *sannyāsa* which would vest her with a quasi-widowhood, his spouse assumed her divine form as *Sarasvatī* and disappeared from mortal vision after acceding to *Śankara*'s request that she would be immanent at the places where he might invoke her presence Such a place he found later on at *Śringerī* on the banks of the *Tungā*, where he installed the goddess under the name of *Śrī Śāradā*. It is said that immediately after her ascent, *Viśvarūpa* duly gave away all his properties in the course of a *Vedik* sacrifice before he became a *sannyāsī*.

His works—After becoming a disciple of *Śankara*, *Viśvarūpa*, now *Sureśvara*, impressed his Master so deeply by his erudition, devotion and spiritual progress that *Śaṅkara* asked him to write a *vārttika* (commentary) on his *Bhāṣya* on the *Brahma sūtra*. But his other disciples still had their own doubts about *Sureśvara* as they could not forget that he had been a staunch ritualist and was worsted by their Master in debate. They feared that he might, under the cloak of writing a gloss, choose to misinterpret the *Ācārya*'s teachings

Śankara, however, had no such misgivings himself He did not think it necessary, in view of opposition from his other disciples, to insist on *Sureśvara* writing the *Vārttika*. He

mentioned to *Sureśvara* about other's misgivings and asked him to write an independent treatise setting out the salient points of *Advaita*, if only to show that the opposition was groundless.

Sureśvara thereupon wrote the book *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* and submitted it to the Master The latter, well pleased with it, gave him permission to write *Vārttikā-s* on the *bhāṣyā-s* on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* of the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajur-Veda*, to which *Śrī Śaṅkara* himself belonged and on the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* of the *Śukla-Yajur-Veda*, which was the *Veda* of *Sureśvara*

In addition to these *Vārttikā-s*, he wrote *vārttikā-s* on the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra* and *Pañcīkaranam*, two other works of *Śankara*; the *Vārttika* on the former has become famous by its name, *Manasollāsa*, and has been in turn commented upon The *vārttikā-s* written by him are standard works and it may be stated without any fear of contradiction that all the thoughts and arguments put forward by later authors are found in them, specially in the voluminous *Brhadāranyaka-bhāṣya-vārttika* He is also credited with the authorship of *Bālakrīḍā*, a commentary on the *Yājñavalkya-Smrti* Thus *Sureśvara* was an astute thinker and a prolific writer.

When *Śankara* established the *Śringerī Matha*, he chose *Sureśvara* as its first Pontiff, for he was the profoundest of his disciples and the oldest in age. If we bear in mind that the four *Mathā-s* founded by the Master in the four quarters of the country correspond to the four *Vedā-s* and were assigned the respective *mahāvākyā-s* found in them, it was only proper that *Sureśvara* who belonged to the *Yajur-Veda* was asked to occupy the *Śringerī Pītha* to which was assigned the *Yajur-Veda*, and the *mahāvākya* from that *Veda* (*Aham Brahmāsmi*, of *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* of *Śukla Yajur-Veda*).

Sureśvara was much older than *Śankara* and also survived the latter As in the case of *Śaṅkara*, there are a number of controversies regarding the exact period of his life also However, the following dates have been accepted by scholars now

	Year of consecration (*Śṛṅgerī Matha*)	Year of *Samādhi*
Śrī Śaṅkarācārya (Born A.D 788)	A D. 808	A D 820
Śrī Sureśvarācārya	A.D. 813	A.D 834
Śrī Nitya Bodha Ghana Ācārya	A.D 818	A D. 848

One circumstance may be pointed out in this connection, for whatever it may be worth. It is said in *Mādhavīya Śankara Vijaya* that in consoling *Sureśvara* for being prevented from writing a gloss on the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya, Śankara* assured him that he would be born again as *Vācaspati* and have his longing fulfilled. The reference is obviously to the well-known commentary, *Bhāmati*, written by *Vācaspati Miśra* on the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*

The accepted traditional story about this book is that the author looked up after finishing it, to find an old woman by his side who had to tell him that she was his wife. So absorbed was he in his work that he had not noticed the passage of years. And now he could not but be moved by her love, devotion and service in not disturbing him while he was at work on the commentary When he realised that women were usually anxious to have children to perpetuate the line, and that his wife was long past the child-bearing age, he determined to immortalise her name, *Bhāmati*, by giving that name to the book he had written Anyhow, learned scholars agree that even a period of 20 years is hardly sufficient for writing such a masterly book like *Bhāmati*

A small structure stands at *Śrngeri* pointing out the place where the mortal remains of *Sureśvara* have been interred, and a *Mahālinga* is being daily worshipped there. Far more than this

physical memorial, his monumentary works have ensured for him a lasting place in the history of the world as an eminent philosopher, and gained for him the deep gratitude of all sincere seekers of Truth

Hastāmalaka

At *Śrīveli* lived a *paṇḍita* by name *Prabhākara* He had a son who was about thirteen years old. The child behaved like an idiot and seemed a dumb fellow He ate only when something was given and slept when he was laid down; he would do nothing by himself. The parents were very unhappy at this behaviour of their only son When *Prabhākara* heard that *Śaṅkara* had brought back to life a dead boy at *Mukāmbikā*, he felt hopeful that the great *Ācārya* would help his son also. So he brought the boy to the *Ācārya* and told him everything about the boy

Śaṅkara made the boy sit up and asked him 'O Boy, who are you? What is your name? From where did you come? Where are you going? What do you wish to have?' The boy stood up, and to the utter surprise of everyone assembled there, sang twelve verses full of *Vedāntik* import expounding his true nature. At the end of it he prostrated to the *Ācārya*. The parents embraced their son, and taking the dust from the *Ācārya*'s feet, put it on his head. *Śankara* then told the parents: 'You cannot persuade this boy to take to the life of a householder He is full with *Brahma-vidyā* He is a model for all seekers of Truth He has taken a human body only for expiating his *prārabdha* You have no use for this boy, therefore, please give him to me.'

The parents, however, were not willing in the beginning to give the boy away to the *Ācārya* *Śankara* then told them the story of the boy thus. 'Perhaps you might remember having gone on a pilgrimage with your wife when this boy was just two years old When you both were thus going along the bank of a river, you saw a *Mahātmā* sitting in meditation

Leaving the boy near the *Mahātmā*, both of you went to the river for a bath. As you were returning, you saw that the child had slipped into the water and was floating down. You jumped into the river and retrieved the child, but by then it had died. Grieved at the loss of your only child, you came to the *Mahātmā* and wept before him. The compassionate *Mahātmā* looked at the boy, and he again came to life. What actually happened was that the *Mahātmā*, out of compassion, gave up his body and entered the body of your child, that is why he has been behaving so strangely all these years. This is a great *Mahātmā* standing by your side.'

When *Śaṅkara* thus told the story of the boy, *Prabhākara* and his wife recalled their old pilgrimage and the incidents. They happily offered their son to the *Ācārya*. *Śaṅkara* then said: 'These verses sung by the boy now will hereafter be known throughout the world. By reflecting on the meaning of these verses, seekers will come to realise the Truth as clearly as an *āmalaka* placed in their palm (*hastam*). Hence I name this boy *Hastāmalaka* and the verses the sang as *Hastāmalakīyam*. On account of its greatness I will compose a commentary on it myself.'

Thus *Hastāmalaka* became a disciple of *Śaṅkara*. He did not talk or write much. Along with *Padmapāda* and *Sureśvarācārya* he followed *Śaṅkara* in all his tours and served the Master. *Śankara* appointed him as the first *Ācārya* of the *Śāradā Matha* at *Dvārakā*.

Toṭakācārya

One of the eminent disciples of *Śaṅkara*, *Totaka* distinguished himself by his selfless service to the Master, by his humility and alertness coupled with a cheerful and enthusiastic disposition.

Girī, which was *Toṭaka*'s pre-monastic name, was a poor *brāhmaṇa* boy. He came to *Śṛṅgerī* when the *Ācārya* was

sojourning there along with his disciples. *Girī* joined the group and stayed with them, rendering all menial service to the Master. He used to sweep, clean the utensils and wash Master's clothes. *Girī* already had his *upaṇayaṇam* (investiture of the sacred thread), and had been initiated into the daily routine to be followed by a *brāhmaṇa* boy, but did not have much formal education. He used to finish his duties and stand at a respectable distance from the group of disciples when the Master held regular classes for them in *Vedānta* every day. He would listen attentively to the Master's erudite expositions and wonder at his scholarship. He watched the beaming faces of the disciples when they grasped the import of the Master's teachings Often he felt sad that he was not blessed with the intelligence or the formal education to follow the valuable lessons taught by the Master. But he would not show it, must less speak about it to others. He continued this life of devoted service to the *Ācārya* with a cheerful countenance.

One day, as usual, the disciples had gathered for the class and the *Ācārya* had taken his seat After the chanting of *śānti-pātha* (invocation), the *Ācārya* sat silently looking hither and thither as if he was expecting someone to come and join the group After some time, *Padmapāda* grew anxious and impatient, and asked the Master politely the reason for his long silence and for not starting the class The *Ācārya* replied that *Girī* had not come *Padmapāda* and the other disciples, taken by surprise, exclaimed that it would not matter since in any case he would not be able to understand the teachings The Master calmly replied · 'But he listens attentively.' The disciples did not know what to say; obviously, they had failed to grasp the meaning of the Master's words.

Girī was at that time washing the Master's clothes in the river *Tungā* flowing nearby. A benign feeling of compassion emanated from the Master's mind and enveloped, as it were, the heart of *Girī*, soaking it with his grace and blessings The alert mind of *Girī*, ripened with *śraddhā* (faith and devotion), suddenly awoke to the fullness of his being, resplendant with the

intimate experience of his own Self. He collected the clothes, made his way straight to the Master and prostrated at his feet. In an ecstatic outburst he sang a hymn in praise of the *guru* and it gushed out of him in the "*Totaka*" rhyme.

The disciples were astounded at this miraculous change in *Girī* and were taken by surprise at the deep meanings of the verses that gurgled out of the meer servant boy who could not even speak a sentence correctly in *Saṁskrta* till a few moments ago They observed a rare glow of spiritual enlightenment in the face of *Girī* and immediately understood that he had the rare privilege of obtaining the Master's grace. They had no hesitation in greeting and acknowledging his greatness. The *Ācārya* placed his hands on *Girī's* head and blessed him He then advised the students on the importance of *śraddhā*, without which no amount of book learning would be of any avail. He exhorted them to develop *śraddhā*, saying that through *śraddhā* alone concentration of mind could be achieved and its vacillations stopped; the mind would then become pure and whatever subject was studied with such a mind, the efforts would be crowned with success; forgetfulness, delusion or doubts would not rise; *śraddhā* was the basis of all true knowledge

Blessing the disciples thus, the *Ācārya* continued the lessons. On an auspicious day, soon after, he initiated *Girī* into the holy order of *sannyāsa* He was given the name of *Toṭaka* after the hymn he sang which happened to be in the *Totaka* rhyme For the benefit of *Toṭaka*, the *Ācārya* started the *Vedāntik* lessons all over again, covering all the *Upaniṣad-s*, *Sūtrā-s* and the *bhāṣyā-s*. Later, he was appointed the first *Ācārya* of *Jyotir Matha*, established in the northern part of the country.

Chapter VII

PHILOSOPHY OF *ŚAṄKARA*

The philosophy of *Śaṅkara* is sublime and unique, highly inspiring and elevating. It commands the admiration of the whole world. *Śaṅkara* made the edifice of *Hindū* religion strong and sturdy by his scientific exposition of the *Upaniṣadik* philosophy, so that even today *Sanātana Dharma* can face the challenges of modern science. Indian philosophy has always come to be identified with *Śankara's Advaita Vedānta*

The quintessence of *Śankara*'s philosophy was stated by himself in half-a-verse :

Brahma satyam jagan-mithyā
Jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ.

'Brahman, the Absolute, alone is real; this world is unreal (māyā); and the jīva or the individual soul is not different from Brahman '

The *Upaniṣadik* terms '*Brahman*' and '*Ātman*' indicate the highest Reality, which is non-dual Supreme *Brahman* is *nirguṇa, nirākāra, nirviśeṣa,* that is, without the *gunā-s* or attributes, formless, without any special characteristics, immutable, eternal, and *akartā* (non-agent) *Brahman* is above all needs and desires; It is always the witnessing subject, It can never become the object as It is beyond the reach of the senses It is non-dual One without a second In *Brahman* there is not the distinction of substance and attributes *Brahman,* the Absolute, is Existence (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) and Bliss (*ānand*), these form the *svarūpa* of *Brahman*

The only way of realizing *Brahman* is *through jñāna*, and in order to attain this *jñāna* and the supreme realization of the Absolute, a four-fold path is prescribed:

i. ***Viveka***—right discrimination,

ii. ***Vairāgya***—detachment from the sensory attractions leading to the extinction of desires;

iii. ***Ṣaṭ Saṃpatti*** i e.,

a. *Śama* i.e., Calmness,

b. *Dama* i.e., Self-control;

c *Uparati* i e , Detachment,

d *Titikṣā* i e , Endurance;

e. *Samādhī* i e., Creative Concentration;

f. *Śraddhā* i.e , faith, and above all

iv ***Mumukṣutva*** i e., the sustained urge to attain liberation and the resolute will to shed human limitations and realise the Absolute in life

Bhakti or devotion is only a step to secure the grace of God, which would obliterate the distinction between the aspirant and God, and so is *karma*, actions without attachment, which bring purity of mind and which leads to the higher state of *jñāna*

Brạhman is not an object as it is *adrśya*, beyond the reach of the eyes Its nature cannot be defined in terms of any category, hence the *Upaniṣad-s* declare. *'neti, neti'*—not this, not this. This does not mean that *Brahman* is a negative concept or a non-entity or a contentless void It is all-full, infinite, changeless, self-existence, self-delight, self-knowledge, and self-bliss It is the essence of the knower. It is the Seer (*dṛṣṭā*), Transcedental Truth (*turīya*), Silent Witness (*Sākṣī*).

Saguṇa Brahman and *nirguna Brahman* are not separate or two *Brahman-s* The same *nirguna Brahman* appears as

saguna Brahman for the worship of the devotees; it is the same Truth from two different points of view *Nirguna Brahman* is the highest *Brahman* from the transcendental viewpoint (*paramārthika*), the *saguna Brahman* is from the relative viewpoint (*vyavahārika*) The Supreme Truth is that *Brahman* which is nondual and relationless To *Śankara* this world is only relatively real (*vyavahārika sattā*) He advocated *vivarta-vāda*, the theory of phenomenal appearance or super-imposition (*adhyāsa*). Just as snake is super-imposed on the rope in the twilight, this world and body are super-imposed on *Brahman* or *Ātman* or Supreme Self If we got knowledge of the rope, the illusion of the snake in the rope will automatically vanish. Similarly, if we get knowledge of *Brahman* or the Imperishable, the illusion of the body and the world will disappear. When *avidyā* or the veil of ignorance is destroyed through knowledge of the Eternal, when *mithyā-jñāna* or false knowledge is removed by real knowledge of the Imperishable, we shine in our true, pristine, divine, splendour and glory

The *Ātman* is that which gives the capacity to the sense-organs to perceive, the mind to feel, and the intellect to think. *Ātman* is referred to in the *Śāstrā-s* as the Perceiver, Feeler and Thinker in the physical, mental and intellectual planes, respectively.

Self Unfoldment

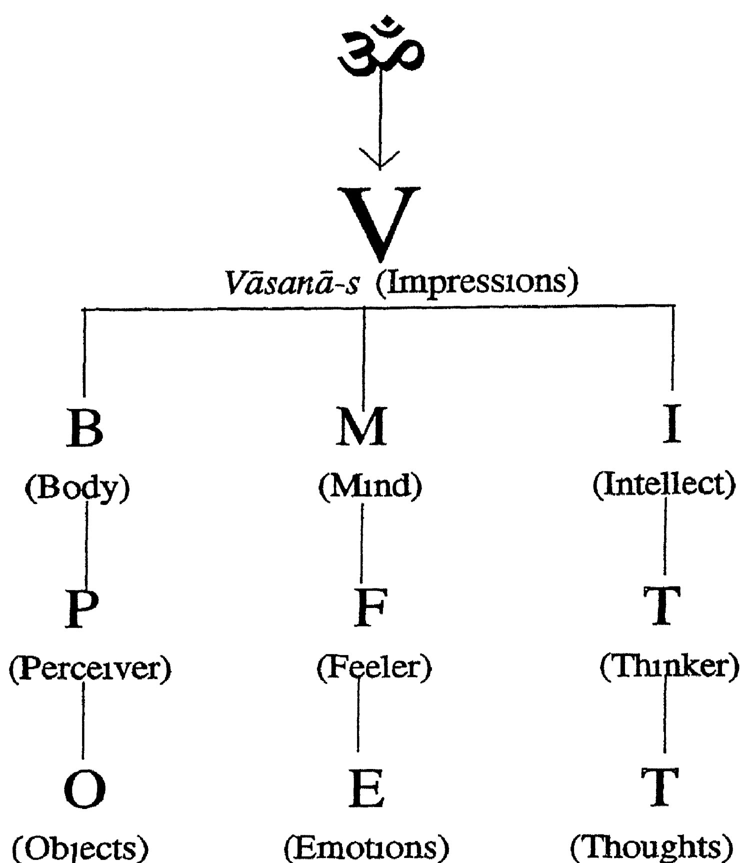
Contemplation : Self-enquiry---

Ours is an Age of Science, wherein we are trained to live and think with a spirit of enquiry The modern scientists, by their wondrous discoveries in the world outside, have contributed much to usher in the Age of Enquiry Their achievements deserve praise, but the scientists and the thinkers of the present generation have another great role to play They must deliver their brethren from the Age of Enquiry into an Era of Contemplation Otherwise, they will be choking the

intellectual evaluation not only of themselves, but also of their generation Their enquiry and research have so far been in 'the outer world,' and now they must shift their field of enquiry from the world of the 'obeјct' to the 'subject,' that is, the enquirer himself. The enquiry into the 'subject' cannot be done in any laboratory Subjective enquiry should be pursued in one's own within And, therefore, it is an enquiry with a difference: an enquiry which we choose to call 'contemplation.'

The world that the scientist observes and tries to understand is totally absent for him if the scientist, the 'observer,' is not there In the wake of the observer, the world observed by him comes into being for him. When the scientist goes to sleep, the observer in him is put out and, therefore, he has no experience of the world. When he wakes up, along with him his world also comes to exist for his experience, the experiencer, the subject, is the counterpart of the experienced, the object. They did not stop with that; they proceeded further to find out the nature of the experiencer, and the mechanism by which he gains his experiences. Through a systematic subjective enquiry they arrived at some staggering truths. Man, the experiencer, is the subject that gains experiences of the world outside through his instruments of exeperience, namely, his body,mind and intellect. All experiences that a man gains in his lifetime are either through his body, or through his mind, or through his intellect.

Through his body with its five sense-organs, man gains various experiences. form through the eyes, sound through the ears, smell through the nose, taste through the tongue and touch through the skin The form, the sound, the smell, the taste and the touch, constituting the world of objects, is experienced by man through his body The same man, the subject, gains experiences of the world of feelings and emotions through the mind And he entertains his ideas and ideals through his intellect The following chart codifies these truths in a modern pictorial representation



ॐ—is the Divine Principle

V—represents *Vāsanā-s* or impressions left on the inner Equipment.

B-M-I—is the equipments through which *Vāsanā-s* (deeply imbedded impressions) operate

P F T—is the individual personality or Ego.

O E T—The total World of experience.

Chapter VIII

ŚAṄKARA'S CONFRONTATION WITH *MAṆḌANA MIŚRA*

by Svāmī Jñānānanda Bhāratī (Tr.)

A lot *h*as been heard about the famous disputation *Śankara* had with *Manḍana Miśra*. An account of the dialogue, the two learned persons had between them, appears in the *Śankara Vijayam* of *Vidyāranya*. The following is its rendering in English.

{To understand the discussion in its correct perspective, the readers need to bear in mind the fundamental differences in their approach to *Vedā-s* by the two disputants i e , *Mandan Miśra* and *Ādi Śankara* Although both accept that the revelations of the *Vedā-s* are for the ultimate good of man, their emphasis differs

The *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā School* to which *Mandan Miśra* belonged hold the view that the only purpose of *Vedā-s* is to prompt man to actions i e , rituals for accumulations of merits as a result of which man attains heavenly felicity for long duration after exhaustion of which (accumulated merits) man returns to earth---again to acquire fresh merits by performing *Karmā-s* and again have a sojourn in heaven to enjoy those till exhaustion of all merits and thus continue the cycle According to them, the purely descriptive passages found in the latter portions of *the Vedā-s* are only aids to *Karmā-s* and have no independent status

The *Uttara Mīmāmsā School* (or *Vedānta*) to which *Śankara* belonged contend that *Vedā-s* have two sections--- the *Karma Kānda* or the Ritualistic Section and the *Jñāna Kānda* of *Vedā-s* also known as *Vedānta* is the crown constituted of the *Upanisad-s* which are the revelations of the nature of the Ultimate Reality and man's relation to it The revelations are not aids to rituals but are an end in themselves as their understanding releases man from the false sense of duality and establishes him in the experience of the Unity of all Existence, ultimately releasing him from the Cycle of Birth and Death Ed }

The dialogue begins with a solemn proclamation by both the parties, declaring the basis of their philosophies and the goals they indicate.

Śaṅkara starts the debate by declaring his stand:

***Śaṅkara*:** *Brahman* is the one Reality, the ever-Pure, the ever-Conscious It is that *Brahman* alone that appears as the universe while clouded by nescience, like the silver in a mother-of-pearl shining in the light of the sun Liberation, namely, freedom from birth and death, is possible only when the knowledge of *Brahman* and the disappearance of the universe in that *Brahman* are secured Such is the teaching of the *Upaniṣad-s*

Maṇḍana Miśra attacks each one of these propositions and begins with the last.

***Maṇḍana*:** The *Vedā-s* are of authority only when they teach us something which we do not or cannot know by any other means of knowledge If they only reiterate the existence of an existent thing, they cannot be of any authority If *Brahman* then is an eternally existent thing, how can the *Upanisad-s*, which according to you simply proclaim its existence, be of any authority? Again, the *Vedā-s* are authority to us only because they contain statements commanding or prohibiting certain actions, supplemented by other passages encouraging or discouraging such actions No statement can, therefore, be of any authority if it cannot directly or indirectly be made accessory to a command or a prohibition According to you, *Brahman* is an established thing and cannot be the object of an action How then can the *Upaniṣad-s* be of any authority? If you want to get over these difficult questions without impairing the authority of the *Vedā-s*, the safest course for you will be to accept the position that the *Upanisad-s* are but mere *mantrik* sounds, the chanting of which at the end of sacrifices produces spiritual merit

Śaṅkara: Your last suggestion is untenable, for mere *māntrik* efficacy can be postulated only in the case of sounds like '*Hum, Phat,*' etc , which cannot convey any meaning at all Now taking your other objections and granting the correctness of your first position that the *Vedā-s* must teach us something which we do not know already, the *Upaniṣad-s* are certainly of authority as they teach us the existence of God. God may be an existent Being but we do not know Him to be existent; and, to teach us that, the *Upaniṣad-s* are necessary Even if we know by any other means of knowledge that God exists, the *Upaniṣad-s* are of authority when they teach us a new fact that God and your Self are identical, e g , 'Thou art That' in the teachings of *Uddālaka* to *Śvetaketu*.

Maṇḍana They do not teach us any such identity Why not understand the sentence as mere praise? The Self is said to be God, only as a piece of glorification of the individual Self, the performer of sacrifices.

Śaṅkara: The difficulty is that the sacrifices find no mention in the context and we will be confusing two altogether distinct contexts if we give any such interpretation to the sentence

Maṇḍana: We may interpret the sentence as importing a command to contemplate on the individual Self as *Brahman*, just as in other places the sun, air, food, etc., are so directed to be contemplated upon as *Brahman* If this interpretation is accepted, the other ingredient that I mentioned as necessary to clothe any statement with authority, namely, relatability to some action, is also secured

Śaṅkara: There is no justification to import a direction 'to contemplate' when neither the context nor the meaning admits of any such importation Further, it is not correct to say that any relation to action is at all necessary to invest any statement in the *Vedā-s* with authority It may be that in regard to the *Pūrva Kāṇḍa* which is primarily concerned with action, the statements therein can be made to relate to some action or other, there is

absolutely no reason to import the same condition in the *Uttara Kāṇda* also

***Maṇḍana*:** In the sentence 'They attain stability who perform *Rātri* sacrifices', do we not import a command 'Thou who want stability must perform *Rātri* sacrifices'? Why not interpret similarly the sentence 'He who knows *Brahman* attains highest' as importing a command . 'He who wants to attain the highest must know *Brahman*?'

***Śaṅkara*:** Knowledge can never be the object of a command. If it is, it can be but an action like contemplation If liberation is the result of any contemplation or other similar action, it must share the fate of all results of action, that is, impermanency Therefore, the importation of a command 'to contemplate,' in addition to being unnecessary and unwarranted, vitally affects the glory of liberation It is the essence of an action that it can be done rightly, done wrongly or left undone, whereas real knowledge cannot be the object of any such alternative treatment at the option of the knower, and it will be meaningless to command where there is no option to obey or disobey

***Maṇḍana*:** Let us grant then that the *Upaniṣad-s* have authority though unrelated to action But why need you understand the passages as teaching the identity of *Brahman* and the Self? They may as well be taken as teaching only similarity

***Śaṅkara*:** First of all, there is no express word signifying similarity Secondly, what is the similarity that the *Upaniṣad-s* can teach us? If it is only the similarity in both being conscious entities, we know it already and we require no *Vedā-s* to teach us that If it is in the qualities other than Consciousness, then all the qualities including Consciousness being the same in both *Brahman* and the Self, they must be only identical

***Maṇḍana*:** Similarity in the qualities does not necessarily lead to the identity of the qualified Though similar, Brahman may be superior to the Self

Śaṅkara: Why do we not now realize the similarity in the qualities?

Maṇḍana: Because of *avidyā* or nescience

Śaṅkara: What particular reason have you to exclude from the dominion of *avidyā* the specific conception that *Brahman* is higher than the Self? Why not logically admit that even that conception is only due to *advidyā* and that, therefore, *Brahman* and the Self are really one?

Maṇḍana: It may be that Consciousness is already a known item of similarity between *Brahman* and the Self. But the *Sāmkhyā-s* trace the Universe to a primary unconscious cause The *Upanisad-s* perhaps want to contradict such a possible theory and therefore teach us that, that primary cause is like the Self, that is, Conscious

Śaṅkara: There is no such words as 'like' in the context Further, the conscious nature of the primary cause has been already made clear by the declaration "It thought" and the later sentence, if it does not carry us any further, will be simply redundant and therefore valueless

Maṇḍana: But your doctrine of One-ness is opposed to all direct experience and reasoning and quite irreconcilable with other pronouncements in the *Upanisad-s* themselves

Śaṅkara: Let us first analyse the nature of your direct experience You say, you perceive that the Self is different from *Brahman* Difference is not a separate substance by itself so as to be the object of perception. It is only a quality and as such it cannot be an object of perception separate from the qualified The qualified here, *Ātmā* the Self, is admittedly not an object of perception How then can you say that you perceive the difference?

Maṇḍana: The *Ātmā* may not be an object of perception to the senses but the inner sense, the mind, may perceive it

Śaṅkara: Assuming that the mind is an inner sense, it is necessary for all perception that the sense must come in contact with the object perceived To make such contact possible, the object perceived must have dimensions The Self is either infinite or atomic, in either case, it has no dimensions and therefore cannot be an object of perception to any sense Strictly speaking, your assumption that the mind is a sense, is by itself incorrect, for the function of the mind is simply to enliven the sense and act as a light to them

Maṇḍana: Don't ask me how I perceive the difference between the Self and *Brahman*. It may be that I am not able to explain it logically. But is it not a fact that somehow, it may be super-sensually, I do perceive the difference?

Śaṅkara: Quite true There is such a perception of difference But that is between the nescient Self and the qualified God It is because of this perception of difference that the *Śruti* becomes useful to us when it declares a non-perceived truth that, if you remove the attributes which are responsible for the distinctness, the un-qualified Self and un-qualified God are one The superficial perception of difference must give way to the higher teaching of the *Śruti*, just like the initial perception of a snake giving way to the later teaching of a friend that it is but a rope

Maṇḍana: Perception may be, as you say, liable to error and therefore, subject to correction But reasoning is ever supreme and that is against you Whatever is not all-knowing is not God For example, a pot being not all-knowing is not God Therefore the Self, not being all-knowing, cannot be God.

Śaṅkara: Your general proposition itself is not correct You seek to deduct its correctness by reference to the illustration of a pot But who told you that a pot is not God?

Maṇḍana: Why, the distinction between a pot and God is certainly patently true and eternal as it is not destroyed even by the knowledge of the Self

Śaṅkara: Certainly not If you mean by the Self only the individual Self qualified by pain and pleasure, he stands on no higher footing than a pot, and no knowledge of such a Self can destroy the distinctness of a pot If, however, one knows really the Self as unqualified by pain or pleasure, to him certainly even the pot disappears as such, for all are the Self You cannot therefore, say that a pot is eternally distinct from God.

Maṇḍana: Your statement cannot be correct, for the distinction between two objects can really disappear only when the distinction is due to the qualities or covering materials and not due to a distinction in the essence of the objects themselves. The distinction between a pot and God is in the essence of the objects themselves This distinction between a pot and God is in the essence of their nature and cannot therefore, disappear at all

Śaṅkara: There is absolutely no proof that a pot is in its essence different from God If you eliminate its name and form which are everywhere the results of nescience, there is no reason to say that it retains any characteristic distinguishing it from God. It is this covering material, nescience or *avidyā*, that gives rise to a perception of distinctness in a pot just as in other objects also Remove this covering and all are God Your illustration therefore falls to the ground, your general proposition and its particular application to the Self go with it

Vedik Passages Teaching Differences: Their Correct Interpretation .....

Maṇḍana: But what do you say to the teaching of the *Śruti* itself that these are two birds sitting on the same tree, one tasting the fruits of *karma* and their other sitting quiet Does it not mean that the individual Self and God are two distinct entities?

Śaṅkara: As we already know from superficial perception and ordinary reasoning that the individual Self is not God, the *Upaniṣad* can have no authority if it proposes to teach us only the same thing If the passage in question means therefore only what you say it does, you cannot urge that statement as of any authority against me. But in fact the sentence does not mean anything of that sort. It mentions only the distinction between the unbound Self and the individualistic *buddhi*, as can be seen from its amplification in the *Paingya Rahasya* were *buddhi* 'with which dreams are seen' and the Self 'in the body' are distinguished You cannot call the omnipresent God as the Self 'in the body' It must therefore mean only the individual Self

Maṇḍana: But how can you say that the unconscious *buddhi* tastes the fruits of *karma*?

Śaṅkara: Do we not say of a rod of iron that it burns when we know that iron by itself cannot burn, but has acquired that quality only because it has come in contact with burning fire. So is the unconscious *buddhi* said to be a taster, simply because of its contact with the conscious Self

Maṇḍana: You cannot, however, explain a similar passage where God and the Self are specifically compared to light and shade

Śaṅkara: It mentions only the ordinarily perceived difference and does not lay down any new truth, which is a necessary ingredient to invest any statement with authority The sentences teaching identity, on the other hand, teach us what we know not already and they alone are, therefore, of authority

Maṇḍana: Your statement seems a curious one When a fact contained in a passage of the *Vedā-s* is supported by direct observation, certainly that passage must be of more authority than one which directly contradicts the evidence of perception

***Śaṅkara*:** You seem to forget that we began with an admitted proposition that the *Vedā-s* can be of authority only when they teach us something which we do not or cannot know by any other means of knowledge It naturally follows that the other methods of proof, perception and reasoning really weaken the authority of the *Śruti*, if they also lead to the same truth as is proclaimed by the *Śruti*

***Maṇḍana*:** Still I feel a difficulty. If what you say is true, how is it that *Jaimini* went wrong in his *Sūtrā-s*?

***Śaṅkara*:** *Jaimini* did not go wrong in his *Sūtrā-s*, for his object was solely to revive the faith in the efficacy of *karma* as a step towards right knowledge, and not to deny the truths of *Vedānta*.

***Maṇḍana*:** If, as you say, he approved of the existence of such a conscious Being which in fact is not different from our own Self, why did he ascribe to *karma* itself the capacity to fructify and thus deny the existence of God?

***Śaṅkara*:** He only showed that one need not postulate the existence of God simply for the purpose of distributing the fruits of *karma* He did not deny the existence of God but only showed that it cannot be proved simply by inferential logic, just as the *Upanisad-s* themselves proclaim that He cannot be known by anyone who does not know the *Vedā-s*,

To remove finally all doubts from the mind of *Mandana, Śankara* then thought of *Jaimini* himself, and the latter appeared in person and confirmed the interpretation of *Śankara* saying 'Am I not a direct disciple of *Śrī Veda Vyāsa*? When he has concluded from the *Vedā-s* that they teach us about the one conscious Being, how did you think it possible that I who sat at his feet would preach any doctrine contrary to his?' He then introduced *Śankara* to *Maṇdana,* as an incarnation of *Śiva* Himself, assumed for the better propagation of a right knowledge of the truths of the *Vedānta*

Chapter IX

DASA SLOKI : THE TEN-VERSED HYMN

(I am that one *Śiva*)

This bunch of ten verses issued forth from the bosom of *Śaṅkara* when he met his *guru Govindapāda* for the first time. The *guru* asked *Śankara* who he was, and the latter's reply was in the form of these ten verses, each ending with the words *Śivaḥ Kevalo'ham* (I am of the form of Pure Auspiciousness) They sparkle with subtle meditative thoughts and are chanted by *Vedāntik* students to lift themselves into high moods of meditation

It is also said that *Śankara* gave out these very verses to the disciples before his disappearance from this world, when they asked him to instruct them specifically on the ideas to be contemplated and meditated upon

Daśa Śloki - दश श्लोकि

न भूमिर्नतोयं न तेजो न वायुः
  न खं नेन्द्रियं वा न तेषां समूहः ।
अनैकान्तिकत्वात् सुषुप्त्येकसिद्धः
  तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ १ ॥

Na bhūmirn-na-toyam na tejo na vāyuḥ
  na khaṁ nendriyam vā na teṣām samūhaḥ
anaikānti-katvāt suṣuptyeka-siddhaḥ
  tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śivaḥ kevalo-'ham

न *na* = (I am) not, neıther, भूमिः *bhūmıh* = earth; न *na* = nor, तोयम् *toyam* = water, न *na* = nor, तेजः *tejaḥ* = fire; न *na* = nor, वायुः *vāyuh* = aır, न *na* = nor, खम् *kham* = ether (ı e , sky), न *na* = nor, इन्द्रियम् *ındrıyam* = sense organ, वा *vā* = and, न *na* = nor, तेषाम् *teṣām* = theır, these, समूहः *samūhah* = aggregate, combınatıon, अनैक *anaıka* = all these, अन्तिकत्वात् *antikatvāt* = are transıent, varıable by nature, सुषुप्ति *suṣuptı* = deep sleep, एक *eka* = unıque experıence of, सिद्धः *sıddhaḥ* = (Self) whose exıstence ıs proved, तत्-एकः *tat-ekah* = that one, अवशिष्टः *avaśıṣṭaḥ* = remaıns, शिवः *śıvaḥ* = Auspıcıous and Pure, केवलः *kevalaḥ* = alone, अहम् *aham* = I am

1. *I am neither earth nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether, nor sense-organ, nor the aggregate of all these; for all these are transient, variable by nature, whıle the Self is that whose exıstence is proved by the unique experience of deep sleep. I am that One, Auspıcious and Pure, that alone remains.*

न वर्णा न वर्णाश्रमाचारधर्मा
न मे धारणाध्यानयोगादयोऽपि ।
अनात्माश्रयाहं ममाध्यासहानाः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ २ ॥

Na varṇā na varṇāśram-ācāra-dharmā
na me dhāraṇā-dhyāna-yogādayo-'pı,
anātmā-śrayāham mamā-dhyāsa-hānāh
tadeko-'vaśıṣṭaḥ śıvaḥ kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = (I am) neıther, वर्णा *varnā* = castes; न *na* = nor, वर्ण-आश्रम-आचार-धर्माः *varṇa-āśrama-ācāra-dharmāḥ* = the rules of caste, socıety and custom, न *na* = nor; मे *me* = for me, धारणा *dhāranā* = concentratıon, ध्यान *dhyāna* = medıtatıon, योग *yoga* = *yoga*, आदयः *ādayah* = etc (other practıces), अपि *apı* = even, also, अनात्म *anātma* = not-Self, आश्रय *āśraya* = ıs rooted ın, अहम् *aham* = I, मम *mama* = mıne, अध्यास *adhyāsa* = ıllusıon, हानाः *hānāh* = dıspellable (by the

knowledge of Self), तत्-एकः *tat-ekah* = that one, अवशिष्टः *avaśiṣtah* = remains, शिवः *śivaḥ* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलः *kevalah* = alone, अहम् *aham* = I am

2. *I am neither castes nor the rules of caste, society and custom, nor are for me even concentration, meditation,* Yoga *and other practices; for all this illusion of 'I' and 'mine' is rooted in the not-Self, and is therefore dispellable by the knowledge of the Self. Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.*

न माता पिता वा न देवा न लोकाः
न वेदा न यज्ञा न तीर्थं ब्रुवन्ति ।
सुषुप्तौ निरस्तातिशून्यात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ३ ॥

Na mātā pitā vā na devā na lokāḥ
na vedā na yajñā na tīrtham bruvanti,
suṣuptau nirastāti-śūnyātma-katvāt
tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śivah kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = (I am) neither, माता *mātā* = mother, पिता *pitā* = father, वा *vā* = and, न *na* = nor, देवाः *devāh* = the gods, न *na* = nor, लोकाः *lokāḥ* = the worlds, न *na* = nor, वेदाः *vedāh* = the *Vedā-s*, न *na* = nor, यज्ञाः *yajñāh* = sacrifices, न *na* = nor, तीर्थम् *tīrtham* = any holy places of pilgrimage, ब्रुवन्ति *bruvanti* = speak of, सुषुप्तौ *suṣuptau* = in deep sleep, निरस्त *nirasta* = repudiate, cast-away, अति-शून्य *ati-śūnya* = beyond the Supreme void or non-existence, आत्मकत्वात् *ātmakatvāt* = Being the Self, तदेकः *tadekah* = that one, अवशिष्टः *avaśistah* = remains, शिवः *śivah* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo'ham* = alone I am

3 *I am neither mother nor father, nor the gods nor the worlds, nor the* Vedā-s, *nor sacrifices, nor any holy place of pilgirmage; for, in deep sleep I am (identical with* Brahman *which, however, is) not*

absolute void or non-existence. Therefore I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.

न सांख्यं न शैवं न तत् पाञ्चरात्रं
न जैनं न मीमांसकादेर्मतं वा ।
विशिष्टानुभूत्या विशुद्धात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ४ ॥

Na sāmkhyaṁ na śaivam na tat pāñca-rātraṁ
na jainam na mīmāmsa-kāder-matam vā
viśiṣṭānu-butyā viśuddhātma-katvāt
tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śivaḥ kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = neither, सांख्यम् *sāmkhyam* = *sāmkhya* (doctrine), न *na* = nor, शैवम् *śaivam* = *śaiva* (doctrine), न *na* = nor, तत् *tat* = that, पाञ्चरात्रम् *pāñcarātram* = *pāñca-rātram* (doctrine), न *na* = nor, जैनम् *jainam* = the *Jaina* (doctrine), न *na* = nor, मीमांसक *mīmāmsaka* = the *Mīmāmsaka* (doctrine), आदेः *ādeh* = any other (holds good), मतम् *matam* = doctrine, वा *vā* = and, or, विशिष्ट *viśista* = special, अनुभूत्या *anubūtyā* = by realisation (it is revealed), विशुद्ध *viśuddha* = absolutely Pure, आत्मकत्वात् *ātmakatvāt* = my nature is, तदेकः *tadekah* = that One, अवशिष्टः *avaśistah* = remains, शिवः *śivaḥ* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo'ham* = alone I am

4. *Neither the* Sāmkhya *doctrine nor the* Śaiva, *nor the* Pañcarātra, *nor the* Jaina, *nor the* Mīmāmsaka, *nor any other (doctrine) holds good; for, by special realisation it is revealed that my nature is absolutely Pure. Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains*

न चोर्ध्वं न चाधो न चान्तर्न्नबाह्यं
न मध्यं न तिर्यङ् न पूर्वा परा दिक् ।
वियद्व्यापकत्वात् अखण्डैकरूपः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ५ ॥

Na cordhvaṁ na cādho na cāntarn-na-bāhyam
na madhyam na tıryaṅ na pūrvā parā dik,
vıyad-vyāpakatvāt akhaṇḍaıka-rūpaḥ
tadeko-'vaśıṣṭaḥ śıvaḥ kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = (I am) neither, ऊर्ध्वम् *urdhvam* = above, न च *na ca* = and nor, अधः *adhaḥ* = below; न च *na ca* = and neither, अन्तः *antah* = inside, न च *na ca* = and nor, बाह्यम् *bāhyam* = outside, न *na* = neither, मध्यम् *madhyam* = middle, न *na* = nor, तिर्यङ् *tıryan* = across, न *na* = neither, पूर्वा *pūrvā* = east, परा दिक् *parā dık* = other direction i e , (nor)west, वियद् *vıyad* = like space, व्यापकत्वात् *vyāpakatvāt* = all pervading, अखण्ड *akhanda* = (I am) indivisible, एक-रूपः *eka-rūpah* = one by nature, तदेकः *tadekah* = that One, अवशिष्टः *avaśıṣṭah* = remains, शिवः *śıvaḥ* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo-'ham* = alone I am

5. *I am neither above nor below, neither inside nor outside, neither middle nor across, neither the east nor west; for, I am indivisible, one by nature, and all-pervading like space. Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.*

न शुक्लं न कृष्णं न रक्तं न पीतं
न कुब्जं न पीनं न ह्रस्वं न दीर्घम् ।
अरूपं तथा ज्योतिराकारकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ६ ॥

Na śuklaṁ na kṛṣṇam na raktam na pītam
na kubjam na pīnaṁ na hṛsvam na dīrgham,
arūpam tathā jyotır-ākāra-katvāt
tadeko-'vaśıṣṭaḥ śıvaḥ kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = (I am) neither, शुक्लम् *śuklam* = white, न *na* = nor, कृष्णम् *kṛṣnam* = black, न *na* = neither, रक्तम् *raktam* = red, न *na* = nor, पीतम् *pītam* = yellow, न *na* = neither, कुब्जम् *kubjam* = bent, न *na* = nor, पीनम् *pīnam* = stout, न *na* = neither, ह्रस्वम् *hrsvam* = short, न *na* =

nor, दीर्घम् *dīrgham* = long, अरूपम् *arūpam* = incapable of being known in any manner or form; तथा *tathā* = and, ज्योतिः *jyotiḥ* = light, आकारकत्वात् *ākārakatvāt* = being of the nature (form) of, तदेकः *tadekaḥ* = that one, अवशिष्टः *avaśiṣṭaḥ* = remains, शिवः *śivah* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo'ham* = alone I am.

6. *I am neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow, neither bent nor stout, neither short nor long, incapable of being known in any manner or form, owing to my being of the nature of light (knowledge or self-resplendent Consciousness). Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.*

न शास्ता न शास्त्रं न शिष्यो न शिक्षा
न च त्वं न चाहं न चायं प्रपञ्चः ।
स्वरूपावबोधो विकल्पासहिष्णुः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ७ ॥

Na śāstā na śāsraṁ na śiṣyo na śikṣā
na ca tvaṁ na cāhaṁ na cāyaṁ prapañcaḥ,
svarūpāva-bodho vikalpā-sahiṣṇuḥ
tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śivaḥ kevalo'ham.

न *na* = (there is) neither, शास्ता *śāstā* = teacher; न *na* = nor; शास्त्रम् *śāsram* = scripture, न *na* = neither, शिष्यः *śiṣyaḥ* = pupil, न *na* = nor, शिक्षा *śikṣā* = teaching, न च *na ca* = and neither, त्वम् *tvam* = you (the hearer), न च *na ca* = and nor, अहम् *aham* = I (the speaker), न च *na ca* = and nor, अयम् *ayam* = this, प्रपञ्चः *prapañcah* = empirical universe, स्वरूपः *svarūpah* = true nature; अवबोधः *avabodhah* = teaching of, विकल्पः *vikalpah* = differentiation, असहिष्णुः *asahiṣṇuḥ* = does not admit, तदेकः *tadekaḥ* = that One, अवशिष्टः *avaśiṣṭaḥ* = remains, शिवः *śivaḥ* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo'ham* = alone I am

7. *There is neither teacher nor scripture, neither pupil nor teaching, neither you (the hearer) nor I (the speaker), nor this empirical universe; for, the teaching*

of one's true nature (the consciousness of Reality) does not admit of differentiation. Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains

न जाग्रत् न मे स्वप्नको वा सुषुप्तिः
न विश्वो न वा तैजसः प्राज्ञको वा ।
अविद्यात्मकत्वात् त्रयाणां तुरीयं
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ८ ॥

Na jāgrat na me svapnako vā suṣuptiḥ
na viśvo na vā taijasaḥ prājñako vā,
avidyātma-katvāt trayāṇaṁ turīyaṁ
tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śivaḥ kevalo-'ham.

न *na* = neither, जाग्रत् *jāgrat* = waking, न *na* = nor, मे *me* = for me, स्वप्नकः *svapnakah* = dream, वा *vā* = and, सुषुप्तिः *suṣuptih* = deep sleep, न *na* = nor, विश्वः *viśvah* = *viśva*, न वा *na vā* = and nor, तैजसः *taijasah* = *taijasa*, प्राज्ञकः *prājñakah* = *prājña*, वा *vā* = or and, अविद्यात्मकत्वात् *avidyātmakatvāt* = are of the nature of nescience, त्रयाणम् *trayāṇam* = of these three states, तुरीयम् *turīyam* = I am the fourth (*turīya*) (beyond these three), तदेकः *tadekah* = that one, अवशिष्टः *avaśiṣtah* = remains, शिवः *śivah* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo'ham* = alone I am

8 *For me there is neither waking nor dream nor deep sleep, nor am I the one conditioned by these three states* (Vaiśva, Taijasa, Prājña), *for, all these are of the nature of nescience* (Avidyā), *but I am the fourth* (Turīya), *beyond these three. Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.*

अपि व्यापकत्वाद्धितत्त्वप्रयोगात्
स्वतः सिद्धभावादनन्याश्रयत्वात् ।
जगत् तुच्छमेतत् समस्तं तदन्यत्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ९ ॥

Api vyāpakatvād-dhı-tattva prayogāt
svatah sıddha-bhāvād-ananyāśraya-tvāt,
jagat tuccham-etat smastam tadanyat
tadeko-'vaśiṣṭaḥ śıvaḥ kevalo-'ham.

अपि *apı* = also, व्यापकत्वात् *vyāpakatvāt* = being all pervasive, हि *hı* = indeed, तत्त्व *tattva* = reality, प्रयोगात् *prayogāt* = for the purpose, स्वतः-सिद्ध-भावात् *svatah-sıddha-bhāvāt* = being Self-established, Self-existent, अनन्य आश्रयत्वात् *ananya āśrayatvāt* = Self-determinant, without dependent on anything else, जगत् *jagat* = universe, तुच्छम् *tuccham* = insignificant, एतत् *etat* = this, समस्तम् *smastam* = all, तत् *tat* = that, अन्यत् *anyat* = other, तदेकः *tadekah* = that One, अवशिष्टः *avaśıṣtah* = remains, शिवः *śıvah* = Auspicious and Pure, केवलोऽहम् *kevalo-'ham* = alone I am

9 *All this universe, being other than the Self, is unreal; for the Self alone is all-inclusive, constitutes the ultimate goal, and is self-established and self-dependent Therefore, I am that One, Auspicious and Pure, that alone remains.*

न चैकं तदन्यं द्वितीयं कुतः स्यात्
न वा केवलत्वं न चाकेवलत्वम् ।
न शून्यं न चाशून्यमद्वैतकत्वात्
कथं सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धं ब्रवीमि ॥ १० ॥

Na caıkam tad-anyaṁ dvıtīyam kutaḥ syāt
na vā kevalatvam na cā-kevalatvam,
na śūnvam na cā-śūnyam-advaıta-katvāt
katham sarva-vedānta-sıddham bravīmı.

न *na* = not, च *ca* = and, एकम् *ekam* = One, तत् *tat* = that, अन्यम् *anyam* = other, द्वितीयम् *dvıtīyam* = second, कुतः स्यात् *kutah syāt* = How can there be?, न *na* = neither, वा *vā* = or, केवलत्वम् *kevalatvam* = absoluteness, न *na* = nor, च *ca* = and, अकेवलत्वम् *akevalatvām* =

non-absoluteness; न *na* = neither; शून्यम् *śūnyam* = non-entity (void); न *na* = nor; च *ca* = and; अशून्यम् *aśūnyam* = entity (non-void); अद्वैतकत्वात् *advaitakatvāt* = absolutely non-dual in Its nature; कथम् *katham* = how then can; सर्व-वेदान्त-सिद्धम् *sarva-vedānta-siddham* = established by all *Upaniṣad-s*; ब्रवीमि *bravīmi* = I speak of.

10. *It can even be said that it is One. How can there be a second, other than It? There is neither absolute-ness nor non-absoluteness, neither non-entity (void) nor entity (non-void); for, It is absolutely non-dual in Its nature. How then can I speak of That which is established by all the* Upaniṣad-s*?*

Chapter X

COMPOSITIONS OF *ŚAṄKARA*

***Bhāṣyā-s:* Commentaries on**

1. *Brahma Sūtrā-s*
2. *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*
3. *Kena Upaniṣad*
4. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*
5. *Praśna Upaniṣad*
6. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*
7. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*
8. *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*
9. *Aıtareya Upaniṣad*
10. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*
11. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
12. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
13. *Śrī Nṛsiṁha Tāpanīya Upaniṣad*
14. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā*
15. *Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāmā*
16. *Sanat Sujātīyam*
17. *Lalitā Tri-satī*
18. *Hastāmalakīyam*

Prakriya Books:

19. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*
20. *Aparokṣānubhūtı*

21. *Upadeśa Sahasrī*
22. *Vākya Vṛtti*
23. *Svātma Nirūpaṇam*
24. *Ātma-bodha*
25. *Sarva Vedānta Sāra Saṁgraha*
26. *Prabodha Sudhākaram*
27. *Svātma Prakāśikā*
28. *Advaita Anubhūti*
29. *Brahma-anucintanam*
30. *Praśna-uttara Ratnamālikā*
31. *Sadācāra-anusandhānam*
32. *Yāga Tārāvali*
33. *Anātmā-śrī Vigarhaṇam*
34. *Svarūpa-anusandhānam*
35. *Pañcikaraṇam*
36. *Tattva-bodha*
37. *Prauḍa-anubhūti*
38. *Brahma Jñānāvali*
39. *Laghu Vākyavṛtti*
40. *Moha mudgaram (Bhaja Govindam)*
41. *Prapañca Sāram*

Hymns and Meditation Verses:

42. *Śrī Ganeśa Pañcaratnam*
43. *Ganeśa Bhujaṅgam*
44. *Subrahmanya Bhujaṅgam*
45. *Śiva Bhujaṅgam*
46. *Devī Bhujaṅgam*
47. *Bhavānī Bhujaṅgam*
48. *Śrī Rāma Bhujaṅgam*
49. *Viṣṇu Bhujaṅgam*

50. *Śāradā Bhujangam*
51 *Śivānanda Laharī*
52. *Soundarya Laharī*
53 *Ānanda Laharī*
54 *Śiva-pādādi-keśānta-varnana Stotram*
55 *Śiva-kesādi-pādānta-varnana Stotram*
56 *Śrī Viṣnu-pādādi-keśānta-varnana Stotram*
57 *Umā-Maheśvara Stotram*
58. *Tripurāsundarī Vedapāda Stotram*
59. *Tripurāsundarī Mānasapūjā Stotram*
60 *Tripurāsundarī Aṣtakam*
61 *Devī-śaṣti-upacāra-pūjā Stotram*
62 *Mantra-Mātruka-Puṣpamālā Stavama*
63 *Kanakadhārā Stotram*
64 *Annapūrna Stotram*
65 *Ardha-nārī-Nateśvara Stotram*
66 *Bhramana-Ambā-Aṣtakam*
67 *Mīnāksī Stotram*
68 *Mīnākṣī Pañcaratnam*
69 *Gaurī Daśakam*
70 *Navaratna Mālikā*
71 *Kalyana Vrṣti-Stavam*
72 *Lalitā Pañcaratnam*
73 *Māyā Pañcakam*
74 *Suvarna Mālā Stuti*
75 *Daśa Śloki*
76 *Veda Sāra Śiva Stotram*
77 *Śiva Pañcaksara Stotram*
78 *Śiva-Aparādha-Ksamāpana Stotram*
79 *Daksināmūrty Aṣtakam*
80 *Daksīnāmūrty Varnamālā Stotram*
81 *Mṛtyuñjaya Mānasa Pūjā Stotram*

82. *Śiva Nāmāvali Aṣṭakam*
83 *Kāla Bhairava Aṣṭakam*
84. *Saṭ-padī Stotram*
85 *Śiva-Pañcaksara-Nakṣatra-Mālā Stotram*
86. *Dvādaśa-Liṅga Stotram*
87 *Kāśī Pañcakam*
88. *Hanumat Pañcaratnam*
89 *Lakṣmī-Nri Simhā-Pañcaratnam*
90 *Lakṣmī-Nri Siṁhā-Karuṇārasa Stotram*
91 *Pānduraṅga-Astakam*
92 *Acyuta-Aṣṭakam*
93. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Aṣṭakam*
94 *Hari Stuti*
95 *Govinda-Aṣṭakam*
96 *Bhagavat-Mānasa-Pūjā*
97 *Prātaḥ-Samarna-Stotram*
98. *Jagannātha-Aṣṭakam*
99. *Gurvāṣṭakam*
100 *Narmadā-Aṣṭakam*
101 *Yamunā-Aṣṭakam*
102. *Gangā-Aṣṭakam*
103. *Manikarṇikā-Aṣṭakam*
104. *Nirguṇa Mānasa Pūjā*
105 *Eka Śloki*
106 *Yati Pañcakam*
107 *Jīvan-Mukta-Ānanda-Laharī*
108 *Dhyāna-Aṣṭakam*
109 *Upadeśa (Sādhanā) Pañcakam*
110 *Sata Śloki*
111 *Manīsā Pañcakam*
112 *Advaita Pañcaratnam*
113 *Nirvāna Ṣatkam*